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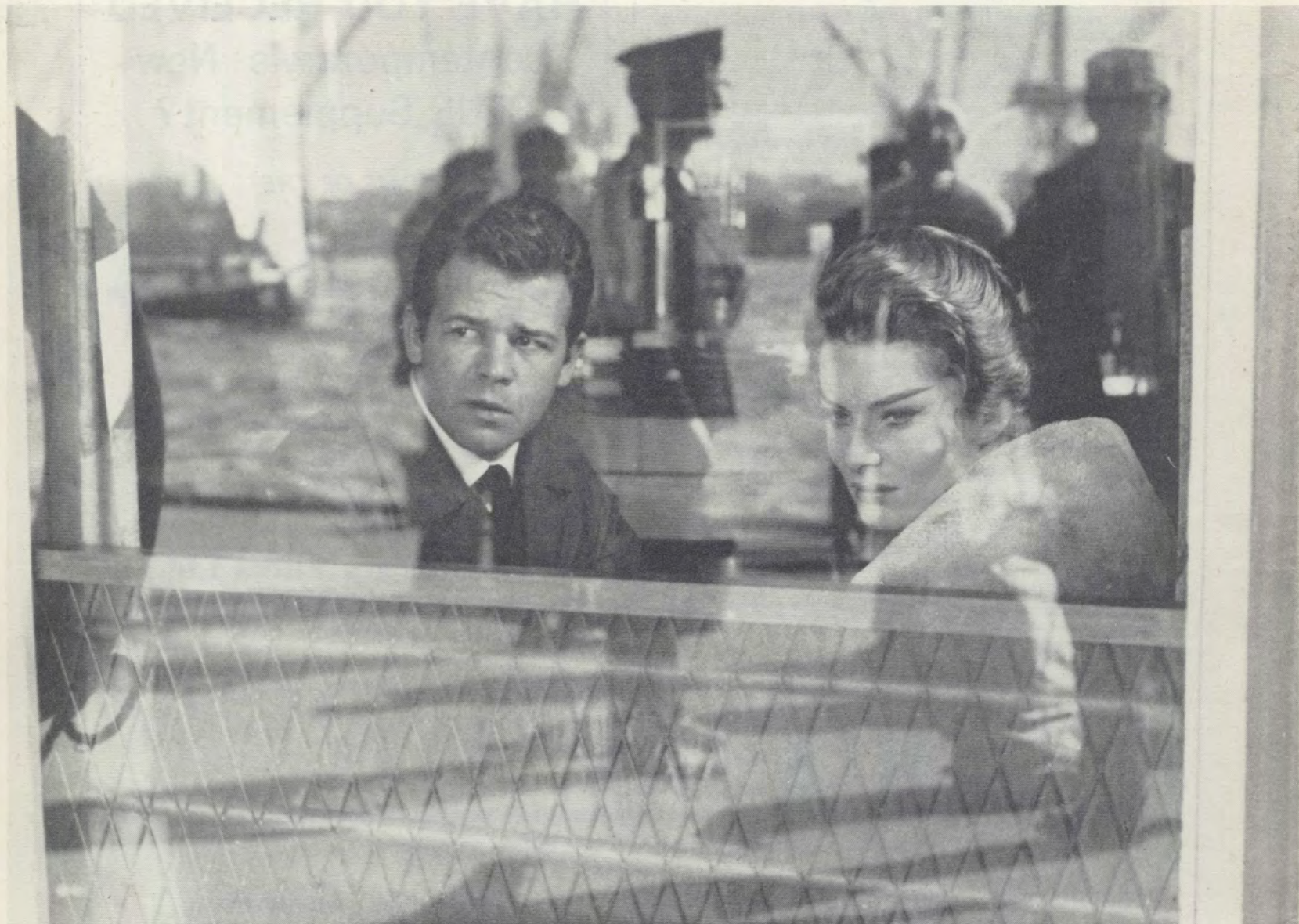
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THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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Lang

Axel Madsen

AT 76, HE IS A man for all seasons. To a growing number of cinephiles, Fritz Lang, who stumbled into films in 1916 and became the towering name of Germany's haunting but brief Golden Era, is a many-splendoured figure of cinema history and, perhaps more important, of its rewrites.

This Viennese, who still sports the junker's insolent monocle and knows more four-letter words than the Berlin cab-driving fraternity, has spent nearly half his life in America, but his vision has its origin in the atmosphere of a fallen Germany. He has never forgiven the Hitler folly, but Germans haven't forgotten his exile and, like Marlene Dietrich, he is badly loved beyond the Rhine. To compensate and to justify, he has become Francophil, pilgrim of festivals and citizen of Beverly Hills. To a thinning circle of friends, he is a man of many moods, thoughts and beliefs, someone living intensely because these are the autumn years with their regrets of things left undone, but also someone at peace with the relativity of accomplishments.

Lang doesn't think highly of Man, but has indulgence for his arts. To him, the twentieth century is Dachau and Hiroshima more than it is Einstein, acceleration of knowledge and humanitarianism through abundance. Mankind's history is written thicker in blood than in poetry, and notions of brotherhood and the approaching century will not necessarily mark man's mutation to braver worlds or final solutions to needs and inequity.

* * *

While whirling down the Summit Ridge Drive on a starry night after an evening heavy with Langian philosophy and Lily Latté's *mousse au chocolat*, I have wondered if his essentially apocalyptic view of man's future, which seems so out of place in the Californian never never land, is eminently personal or the inevitable conclusion of a generation which twice saw the world go up in flames. Glittering their insolent denial below are the million and one lights of the Los Angeles basin, the toolshop where man's most daring dreams are invented, blueprinted, mocked up, prototyped and turned into streaks into the blue yonder. The awesome Californian scientific community has written off the dire prophecies of Huxley, Orwell and their generation as obsolete fantasies of another era. But high above the lights in Benedict Canyon, where the Beverly Hills slope into the Santa Monica Mountains, sits Lang, a Goethian figure of splendid isolation, a man of other worlds and other times who has but forbearance for the self-confidence of the future planners below. Seeing me to the car after a long evening, he stops in the scented, semi-tropical night to look at a full moon. "It's a night for evil spirits and prayers of unloved maidens," he smiles softly.

But Lang is also here-and-now appetites and heated argument for argument's sake. Tell him you think *Metropolis* is great and he will machine-gun you with staccato whys. Tell him you think that the episode of *The Avengers* he has insisted on seeing looks like a remake of a *Die Spinnen* episode, and he will ham up an answer to the effect that you are a perfect idiot only because you thought of it first. Lang hates adulation but blooms in bouncy conversation, good cigars and filial irreverence. Tell him you think a new era is dawning in American cinema and he will shut you up with a blunt "Name one great American film in the last twenty years." You may stammer a couple of titles, but he will reiterate his question until you give up and are forced to admit that there aren't any.

Georges Sadoul has written silly things about him, he says, but if historians misrepresent him, it is his own fault. An untiring talker, Lang reacts as much as he acts and his answers are coloured by the context, the tone and *repartie* of a conversation. Ask him cold his opinion of *Le Mépris* and he will come up with a neat and lofty defence of Jean-Luc Godard's integrity; but put the same question to him some time later in a flow of pleasant after-dinner chatter and he will make a plea for creators' right to failures. He will add sarcastic afterthoughts about the vicissitudes of film-making, conjure up examples from his vast storehouse of anecdotes, and gracefully floor you with cynical portraits of persons you thought would be sacred cows even to him. Lang's best audience and living encyclopedia when stories have to be authenticated or fleshed out with detail is Miss Latté, a former Berlin writer, with whom he has shared his life for the last thirty years. "Mickey," he will call out in her direction, "isn't it true Harry Cohn nearly didn't want me to direct *The Big Heat* because I showed up with glasses and he found me less authoritarian than when wearing my monocle?" Lily will confirm the story and sometimes add a punchline he has forgotten.

Lang has the emigré passion for intrigue, but he has no taboos, only subjects he doesn't care to dwell upon. One is his brief association with Bertolt Brecht in World War II Hollywood. Brecht was a haughty latecomer in the cautious German-speaking colony, arriving from his Scandinavian exile in 1941, and it was only because of an impassioned plea from Lion Feuchtwanger that the refugee playwright got the bread-and-butter writing job on *Hangmen Also Die* (1942), the blatant propaganda picture both Lang and Brecht soon repudiated. Brecht had only contempt for cinema in general and for the *Hangmen* assignment in particular, but Lang manages to excuse his erstwhile screenwriter.

"Brecht got a raw deal here. There were endless fights with producers and so on," is about all Lang will say. If pressed, he will add that their acquaintance was casual, that Brecht's Santa Monica house was a weird place full of emigrés forever playing chess, that the Feuchtwangers, critic Eric Bentley, the composers' nucleus of the German colony, and, towards the end of the war, Charles Laughton, were his friends and that

he himself is no Brecht fan. "I mean François Villon did all that five hundred years ago, n'est-ce pas?"

Money is another realm Lang doesn't care about. Lang is not unmindful of the need for commercial pictures and has made his share. A majority of his American pictures have been box-office failures and he has developed a thick hide and clever phrases against pecuniary considerations. His enemies, and they are numerous, say his wife's jewellery financed his 1933 exodus; others have it that he left behind a fortune accumulated as Germany's top director. None of his last pictures were successes, but he lives in frugal comfort.

* * *

Germany is a vast subject. Lang made his last three films—*Der Tiger von Eschnapur*, *Das indische Grabmal* (1958), *Die tausend Augen des Dr. Mabuse* (1960)—in Germany. His return in 1957 was welcome and the German press only soured on him after the costly *Tiger* and *Indian Tomb* duo—advance-billed as surefire launching pads for a resurrected German cinema—turned out to be box-office failures.

The City of Berlin has honoured Lang and the West German government decorated him in 1963 (France made him 'officier des arts et lettres' two years later), but another instance of German officialdom has teased old wounds. Lang was a jury member at the 1966 Rio de Janeiro festival and because he sneaked to the men's room during the screening of Michael Pfleghar's *Serenade für zwei Spione*, a storm was kicked up

made explanation for Germany's failure to spawn a second Golden Era as fertile and explosive as Berlin's festival of the arts after World War I. He feels one reason could be a lack of producers with vision. "There are no Erich Pommers these days. Some say Pommer destroyed UFA; he said UFA destroyed him. I really don't know, but he was a bitter man to the end," Lang sighs. "Producers want to be sure their films make it, but nothing is sure. Even death; I sometimes wonder."

If the *Serenade für zwei Spione* affair sticks uncomfortably in Lang's throat, he admits anti-German anthologies such as Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* are unreadable today; and he finds there is something sick in U.S. television's perpetual harping on World War II violence with series such as *Rat Patrol*, *Combat*, *Jericho* and *Hogan's Heroes*.^{*} "But how can you imagine a country with 800 years of blood-drenched history becoming a model democracy overnight?" he asked me once with an expression that hesitated between anger and irony. More seriously, he admitted that the legendary heaviness and yearnings for netherworlds of the Teutonic soul are overworked clichés, and that no nation has any monopoly on cruelty. "What this country needs is perhaps an atomic war to learn to be human," he added as a dark afterthought.

"The History of German Cinema is yet to be written and it won't be Enno Patalas and the *Filmkritik* clique that will do it. But Sadoul has also written silly things about German



LANG ON SET. WITH ROBIN RAYMOND AND BARBARA NICHOLS ("BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT"); WITH KEITH ANDES ("CLASH BY NIGHT"); WITH JOAN BENNETT ("SCARLET STREET").

with embassy queries for an explanation of his 'snubbing' of the official West German entry. "Hitchcock claims a film's length should be related to the endurance of the human bladder," he sighs after telling me the story.

Lang has not yet seen any examples of 'Bubi's Kino' (vs. 'Papi's Kino'; Bavarian slang for boy's cinema versus 'cinéma de papa'). Alexander Kluge (*Abschied von Gestern*) was an assistant on *The Indian Tomb*. Lang knows about *Der junge Toerless* and is happy that Volker Schlöndorff has been able to sign a six-film contract with Universal. He gleefully rubs his hands when told that Hansjurgen Pohland's filmisation of Gunter Grass' *Katz und Maus* has become a political issue in Bonn because of its irreverent treatment of yesteryear's master symbols, but shakes his head in disbelief at the Berlin entrepreneur Arthur Brauner's folly of remaking *Die Nibelungen*.

"These young Germans are frightfully insolent, but so were we. However, they lack self-discipline. Eckelkamp told me one of these boys came to him with a project, saying he would die if he wasn't able to make it. Nah-yah, Eckelkamp thought of the French wave and decided to produce it. After five weeks shooting and a million marks, the young man came to Eckelkamp and said he was sorry but he had lost his feel for it and wouldn't be able to finish the film."

Lang is instinctively with 'Bubi's Kino' and has no ready-

cinema and me. What? Taking the sentence 'We are all descendants of Cain' out of one of my early films, he concludes that the all-obsessive theme of my life is guilt. I'm interested in other things also—in what happens to my characters. That's why I don't think Antonioni is very healthy for the younger generation, because his pictures say that there is nothing to hope for."

But if Antonioni feels negativism is the message today?

"No. Film is too vast a medium for self-indulgence. It's a dangerous tool and you must be responsible when you use it."

You're limiting cinema, then?

"And why not? I still think that the struggle is the important thing in life, even more important than goals. Brutality is permissible—dramatically. People no longer believe in hell and brimstone, or even in retribution, but they fear physical pain; so brutality is a necessary ingredient in dramatic development and denouement, as I've said before. But to tell people there is nothing—no."

Lang was also disappointed with Luc Moullet's book on him,[†] and wonders why an art as new as film is already cluttered with so many historical inaccuracies.

^{*} *Jericho*, *Combat* and *Hogan's Heroes* were dropped from network programming as of June, 1967.

[†] *Fritz Lang*, by Luc Moullet. Seghers, Paris, 1963.

The son of Paula (née Schlesinger) and Anton Lang, a prominent Vienna architect, Fritz is a graduate art student, painter and caricaturist making his first steps in Munich and Paris bohemia when the shot rings out from Sarajevo. Arrested by French authorities as an 'enemy alien', he manages to escape and to reach Vienna, where he is drafted into the Imperial Austrian Army. He serves on the Western Front, becomes a lieutenant and nearly loses his right eye when a shell explodes 50 feet from him. Evacuated to Germany, he sees a Max Reinhardt show for injured servicemen, plays in a Red Cross revue and feels the performing arts are to be his life. During a lengthy convalescence, he starts to write playlets and simple scenarios and in 1916, Joe May cranks out a two-reeler from a Lang scenario. At the end of the war, Lang mingles with Berlin's demobilised artists. He soon gravitates toward cinema, newly discovered by dadaism and expressionism, meets Pommer, producer at DECLA (Deutsche Eclair) and works as a reader of scripts. He marries Thea von Harbou, already a well-known writer of thrillers. Together they collaborate on scripts. Pommer encourages Lang's directing ambitions, and in 1919 Lang makes his first picture (after his own scenario)—*Halb Blut (Halfbreed)*, an exotic latter-day *Madame Butterfly* allegory.

Von Harbou, whom Lang divorced in 1934, has had a profound influence on the Golden Era, not only as the writer of her husband's big silent movies but also as screenwriter for Murnau, Ewald Dupont and others. She never leaves the country and continues her career under the Nazi régime and through the post-war era, writing for Veit Harlan, Josef von Baky, Gerhard Lamprecht and others.

With Pommer producing and his wife writing, Lang makes three *Die Spinnen* serials, starring a fearless character named Kay Hoog, who is a cross between Judex and a Teutonic Dorian Gray forever fighting a secret, world-wide crime syndicate called The Spiders with headquarters in a Central American jungle. (Philippe de Broca pays tongue-in-cheek homage to The Spiders by ending *L'Homme de Rio* in a similar way-out decor with the same two-dimensional characters.) Lang specialises in exotica and makes a half-dozen small pictures laid in faraway lands, and follows up with *Der müde Tod*, a tale of romantic necrophilia in which Death allows two lovers to live their destiny over again three times; and, in 1922, the smash hit *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*.

UFA absorbs Deutsche Eclair and gets Pommer and Lang in the bargain. *Die Niebelungen*, which makes Lang world-famous, is a UFA double-feature taking seven months to shoot during 1923-24. It is a national monument to German and expressionistic architecture in which an Aryan Siegfried, loved by a long-tressed Kriemhild, rides through colossal, half-medieval, half-cubist sets to express primitive guilt, wrath and vengeance and foretell Wagnerian doom.

In 1925, Lang comes to America, stays eight weeks in Hollywood and on his return says he was "unbelievably impressed." While on the boat waiting for the quarantine officers, he glimpses the Manhattan skyline and begins to plan a vast fable of the future.

The making of *Metropolis*, with its gigantic sets and cast of thousands, nearly ruins UFA, but the film impresses the German public and is widely discussed abroad. Picking up the Mabuse theme again, Lang makes *Spione* ('28), a story of a master criminal turning into a kind of Dr. Strangelove. The film is a hit, but *Frau im Mond* ('28), a science fiction yarn featuring a quite credible rocket trip to the moon, doesn't impress. In 1931, Lang makes his first talkie, *M*, his most famous and, to himself, best film. Like so many Germans of the period, he is a profound romanticist, fascinated by cruelty, fear and horror. He personally knows and studies a number of murderers, including the notorious child slayer of Dusseldorf. *M*, based on this almost clinical interest, arouses comment all over the world.

German exhibitors beg Lang for another Mabuse picture. He is himself looking for some way in which to show his distaste for Hitler and his Brownshirts and makes *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse*, the story of a mad scientist. Lang places Nazi philosophies in the mouth of the madman and the film is banned. The new régime is ready, however, to make



LANG IN 1938, ON THE SET OF "YOU AND ME".

allowances for Germany's best known film-maker, and Propaganda Minister Goebbels offers a leading post in the soon-to-be reorganised industry to Lang just before he leaves the country. In Paris, he adapts fellow Austro-Hungarian Franz Molnar's *Liliom* with moderate success. David O. Selznick, then vice-president of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, is visiting Paris and signs up the director.

Lang spends a long year in Culver City watching and learning English, and makes his American debut with *Fury*, an indictment of lynch law and mob rule with a front office-imposed ending, which is universally praised when released in 1936. After *Fury*, Lang leaves M-G-M and begins to freelance. *You Only Live Once* ('37) is a bitter tragedy of a young couple dogged by the police, and *You and Me* ('38) again stresses the responsibility of society to prisoners and ex-convicts. All this time Lang is studying American ways, and makes long trips through Nevada, Arizona and Navajo territories, leading to his pair of Westerns for Darryl Zanuck—*The Return of Frank James* ('40), with Henry Fonda in the title role, and *Western Union* ('41). *Time* magazine says of the latter that it has "the same swift pace and scenic beauty that distinguished John Ford's *Stagecoach*."

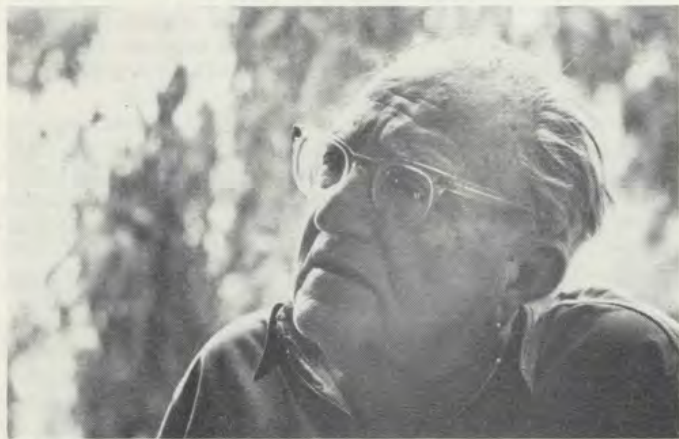
Between Pearl Harbour and VJ Day, Lang makes *Man Hunt* ('41), the story of a renowned English big-game hunter (Walter Pidgeon) who goes out to kill his biggest game; *Hangmen Also Die*, inspired by the slaying in a Prague street

WITH SYLVIA SIDNEY: "YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE."



of Hitler's Czechoslovakia Kommandant Reinhard Heydrich; *The Ministry of Fear* ('43), a Graham Greene adaptation starring Ray Milland; *The Woman in the Window* ('43) with Edward G. Robinson and Joan Bennett, and *Scarlet Street* ('45). After two 1946 *policiers*, *Cloak and Dagger* and *The Secret Beyond the Door*, Lang directs in 1949 *House by the River* and the next year the war movie *American Guerrillas in the Philippines*. His next is his third and best Western, *Rancho Notorious* (screenplay by Daniel Taradash), followed by an adaptation of Clifford Odets' *Clash by Night* ('51), the Anne Baxter-Richard Conte thriller *Blue Gardenia*, and the very successful *The Big Heat* with Glenn Ford and Gloria Grahame. His last four American films are *Human Desire*, an adaptation of Zola's *La Bête Humaine*, the Niebelungen-accented *Moonfleet* (both in '54) and the cheaply made, tightly constructed thrillers *While the City Sleeps* ('55) and *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* ('56).

The majority of the last dozen pictures are box-office failures, and in 1957 Lang returns to Germany at Brauner's invitation to recoup. For CCC Films in Berlin he makes two costly Eastern epics—remakes of his ex-wife's *Tiger from Eschnapur* novel (von Harbou had died in 1954) and of Joe May's 1921 serial *The Indian Tomb*; but these attempts at resurrecting the past are commercial disasters. "The world of these films had died with their public," wrote *Filmkritik*, "and the missing dialogue with the sound screen . . . paralyses all bravura." In 1960, Lang makes his 43rd and, to date, last



LANG IN 1967: PHOTOGRAPH BY AXEL MADSEN.

film—*The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse*, a moderate box-office success. In 1963, he plays himself in Godard's haunting big-budget fiasco *Le Mépris*, writing most of his own lines himself.

Lang shies away from questions about future plans, usually saying that he is superstitious about announcing projects but managing to imply that something is pending. Recently, he wondered aloud to me if he shouldn't imitate his neighbour Jean Renoir and tell whatever he has to say on paper rather than try to mount a production. "The medium really doesn't matter as long as you can express yourself," he sighed.

* * *

Who is Mabuse? If the question is put to Lang, he will squash all notions of transcendence, philosophy or of a Germanic 'Übermensch' figure. "The 1922 *Dr. Mabuse* was a routine adaptation of Norbert Jacques' thriller," he says. "It grew out of its time. Germany was a place where every type of excess was encountered and the film reflected the inflationary hysteria, the anarchistic streak, the despair and vices of the time. The public loved it, as they did *The Spy*. Now, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* eleven years later was of course a veiled commentary on Nazism. The original of *The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse* was a newspaper article describing an experimental U.S. Army bullet that leaves no marks, and I wanted to make a brutal and realistic picture.

"In the original film, I had left Mabuse in a madhouse and I hesitated to bring him out again when Seymour Nebenzal thought we could make a pile of money in 1932. I saw the possibilities of snide commentaries with this story of a director

of a lunatic asylum hypnotised by his patient. It was rather sophisticated, but Goebbels banned it on March 29, 1933 even before any trade screenings were held. Goebbels apologised and told me that he and Hitler had seen *M* together in a small-town moviehouse and they wanted me to make films for them."

Jean Domarchi has formulated nebulous theories to the effect that Lang's American movies are superior to his Berlin output. Lang refuses to cleave his work nationally but acknowledges that the 1920s were his most creative and independent years. He rather likes his three Westerns and tells how an Arizona old-timer wrote him that *Western Union* was the most authentic Western he had seen. Lang was to have made a fourth Western in 1950, *Winchester '73*, but after his option on Stuart N. Lake's novel expired, Universal assigned Anthony Mann to direct it.

Lang has no love for the U.S. film industry and says he would never again make a Hollywood picture. Retrospectively, however, he admires the iron fists of 'czars' like Cohn and Mayer. "Hollywood exists only to make money. I haven't seen an American picture in years that I would like to see again and that's some sort of guideline for me. I hate over-dialogued cinema and that's where America is right now. I have seen a lot of TV recently, for reasons . . . anyway, TV is awful, it's like looking at a play with opera glasses."

To Lang, directing is applied psychology and a good director is simply a good analyst. "The power of the screen has always been its intimacy—at least up to CinemaScope, which I hate. The director would command an audience to see only what he regarded as dramatically important. He used the close-up to say something without distractions. But Godard never uses any close-ups, which is contradictory since he and his contemporaries are interested in form. I'm more interested in content, I must confess, but something *does* come out of the form-over-content thinking."

Lang cites the Jack Palance-Brigitte Bardot fatal car accident in *Le Mépris* as a revealing example of the generation gap. "Now, we would have shown the whole thing—the car at high speed, whining tires, impact, all those things—but Godard is more interested in what the accident does to the story, the surviving characters. His interest is in the consequences of things. There is a great difference in work methods also. My generation, when we started in the silent era, had to think in terms of action. We created pictures in motion. Godard, who is very consistent, goes to great pains to continue our work. Our methods are different, of course. I come to a studio in the morning knowing what I want. I don't change.

"Sound is rarely used dramatically these days and yet the world is becoming auditive, Easternising itself. Our civilisation is moving away from the visual toward the auditive. The visual is the only sense that gives us detachment, objectivity, rationality. All the other senses are irrational, discontinuous and disconnected, especially sound. We're Easternising ourselves . . ."

Lang thinks *Metropolis* is pretty bad today ("that shot of Eric Masterman holding back the man-sized hands of the clock is really too much, isn't it?"), but he doubts whether a new *Metropolis* could be made, whether there is really anything new to say. "All right, so man has to live with the machine," he says with an annoyed gesture of helplessness. "Is that a message today? He still has to live with himself first."

Lang can make an eloquent plea for youth and on more than one occasion has gone out of his way to help young Europeans coming to Hollywood. I have seen him spend an hour painstakingly composing and rewriting a letter of recommendation for a young German trying to break the union barrier, gallantly offering to say the youth was his assistant on his latest picture if it would help.

Lang thinks the Californian university youth with its generosity and golden insouciance is beautiful, as are its revolts, but he has a father's apprehension for its future. "They shouldn't fight their parents' battles although it's hard for us to admit," he smiles. "Let's not diminish their birthright."



WITHOUT AND WITHIN

Thoughts on politics, society, and the self in some recent films

MICHAEL KUSTOW

I THE LATEST LEN DEIGHTON novel contains a brown paper docket, marked TOP SECRET and holding facsimiles of memos passed between the President of the United States, the British Prime Minister, and the directors of the secret services. It speaks of a highly complicated manoeuvre to leak some genuine nuclear information to the Chinese, a move which will contribute to maintaining the balance of terror. Once you have read through these documents, maps and diagrams, you can start the novel, which tells a story of sex and violence in a style that is the equivalent of extreme close-up. Only at the end, and then murkily, do the deeper currents of global politics impinge on the magnified ant-like scurrying of this plot. The brown paper envelope is *La Grande Histoire*, the world of politics, treaties, wars, spies, CIA funds and agents; the novel itself is *la petite histoire*, the dramas of street and bedroom, private lives and tangibility. These two worlds seem to have become separated in our experience, or we would like them to be so; and yet public and private, in some inescapable way, are more tightly twined together in the fabric of our experience than ever before. The problematical interfusion of these two worlds in some recent films, and the wildly different ways in which

directors have found methods of defining this without-and-within existence, is the subject of these thoughts.

2 IN JULES ET JIM, *La Grande Histoire* (in this case the First World War) suddenly erupts across the screen in a shocking manner: familiar images of trenches and puttee-clad soldiers rushing across no-man's-land are horribly distorted as Truffaut stretches the dimensions of the frame to fit the wide-ratio screen. The effect, after the loving, careful images of the leisurely pre-war flirtations of Catherine and the two boys, is terrifying: a grotesque adult kicking down the defenceless play-pen.

In *Morgan*, *La Grande Histoire* has become a collection of revolutionary pin-ups in the station-wagon where Morgan sleeps; ciphers in the form of flags, photographs of Trotsky, all the paraphernalia of 1917 Russia reduced to something like toys for a mind at breaking point—until it breaks, and they strike back in Morgan's madness as a partisan firing squad threatening him with execution. Politics as an apocalyptic threat, always exacting its price on those who think they've betrayed it.

Politics is paranoiac too in Jacques Rivette's *Paris Nous Appartient*, whose mysterious style and elliptical action, coupled with a jagged soundtrack, almost add up to make you believe in the existence of a world-wide conspiracy of evil which inhabits the minds of these refugees from the Spanish Civil War and McCarthyism.

Rosi's *Salvatore Giuliano* stays resolutely at the other end of the spectrum. By keeping its central character a faceless gunman in a white coat, and by using the impersonal device of an action shunted about by date-and-place captions, it lays bare the structure of a social and political situation with as much clarity as anyone involved in the troubled, ambiguous world of the Mafia and Italian politics in Sicily could ever have achieved. Watching this film is like watching trapped insects struggling—we see the agony and passion of a character like Pisciotta, Giuliano's lieutenant, and yet we watch it like privileged spectators, knowing that this man's desperate efforts to tell the truth (*his* truth) will be stifled by the immense torture machine of which a few fragments have been unveiled to us.

3 JOHN BERGER, WRITING in *New Society*, 11 May 1967: "Last week Sir Alec Douglas-Home, invited by Oxfam, opened a memorial exhibition of Vicky's work in Chelsea. Let all men of goodwill, whatever their politics, now honour this man who killed himself as a result, at least partly, of his despair at their politics . . . His political despair must have been compounded with subjective factors, but, in the main, it was rational. Vicky's death marks the end of an era and an illusion. The example of Wilson's government has now made it clear—as it was never so clear before—that no fundamental political, social, or economic changes will be made in this country by means of the present parliamentary machinery or by any of the existing political parties as they are now structured and led."

And while the currency of politics is devalued to the level of advertising language, while politics itself is becoming, with Wilsonism or Gaullism, part of the man-manipulation industry, the war in Vietnam goes on, and we are day by day upping the total of the hundred million people we have already killed in this century. And pictures of the blood and the bodies rub shoulders in our Sunday supplements with four-colour features about cooking and interior decorating, advertisements for cigars and motor-cars. And the stream of instant-history images goes on, with the news gradually becoming less and less easy to distinguish from the commercials. And in Jean-Luc Godard's *Made in U.S.A.*, like a desperate commercial, comes the recurring caption: GAUCHE ANNEE ZERO. THE LOWEST POINT OF THE LEFT. GAUCHE ANNEE ZERO.

4 "WITHOUT ANY DOUBT I WAS in a political film, that's to say, Walt Disney plus blood." Anna Karina comes to Atlantic City, just after elections in which the communists have been decisively beaten. She comes in reply to a telegram from her lover, Richard P—(every time a character in the film mentions Richard's name, a bell rings, or a jet flies over and covers it). When she arrives, she finds he is missing, believed dead. She sets out to find who killed him—for, just as in the Ben Barka affair on which this plot is largely based, a man who 'disappears' is as good as dead. She gets entangled in a web of secret police within the police force, rumours, left-over vendettas from colonial wars, blind alleys opening on to bloody corpses, allusions to the deaths of key witnesses in the Kennedy assassination, tape-recorded last messages—a Kafkaesque labyrinth of apparently senseless plots and wheels within wheels.

Out of this labyrinth bright sharp images jut forth. Godard has shot this film with the same breathtaking sense of vivid colour as in *Une Femme est une Femme*—glowing yellow walls, the pop art poetry of garage-signs, flipper-machines and neon strips, Karina moving among it all in a bright turquoise dress with bold diagonal stripes. And suddenly, in this almost too

perfect world ('the weather was fine enough to take a camera outdoors and make a colour film'), she will open a door and find sitting in a dentist's chair a body whose head is totally wrapped in bloodstained bandages, or come at the end of a corridor upon a whimpering female figure with bandages wound round hands whose fingernails have recently been pulled, or confront another girl who can only mutter about a razor blade.

And against these intimations of a frightful behind-the-scenes violence are set two 'poets'—a boy called David Goodis who is trying to complete a novel in the hotel room into which Karina drags an unconscious body, and the taped voice of Richard P. Goodis is killed by Karina after he has saved her life. "Now I shall be able to finish my novel," he tells her, and she replies, "No . . . the truth must not be known. If you finish your novel everyone will know it, for poetry is truth." Richard P. has already been killed by political enemies (as far as I can make out the likeliest enemy was a rival left-wing group trying to wrest power from the communist party which Richard represented). He too had a kind of poetry, though very different from Goodis' romantic lyricism. "The present government is seeking to divert social unrest into the safe channels of verbal patriotism and the inspiring adventure of nuclear power." So runs Richard's voice on the tape, conducting an acute political analysis of Gaullism with constant references back to Danton and the French Revolution. "Is it the first time that a policy has wavered from right to left, torn between the sublime obsessions of a grand old man capable of imposing them on the people even at the cost of higher food prices, and the interests of those who wait to succeed him and know that their best chance of grabbing the people tomorrow lies in keeping them fat and happy today . . ."

These sound like the words of Marat; and like Marat, Richard P. has been assassinated, another in the long line of prophets whom history proves right but kills before they can practise what they preach. Godard grinds home this desperate situation by making Richard's 'message' literally almost unbearable—the tape is so loud and distorted that it grates on the ear mercilessly.

Karina's journey through this labyrinth is a progress from being appalled ("Politics, money—I don't know how I've stopped vomiting since I've been involved in it all") to assuming her responsibility, her complicity. By the end of the story she has knocked out one man and killed two, and is well and truly in the labyrinth herself. "Where am I? Is it me speaking? Can I say that I am this language I speak, this language where my thoughts slip and slide? Can I say I am these murders I have committed with my own hands . . . The drama of my consciousness is that having lost the world, I try to recover myself—and lose myself in that very movement . . ."

The pivotal scene for Karina's development in this film resembles the scene in *Vivre sa Vie* where she became aware of her responsibility ("Je lève la main—je suis responsable"). This scene too takes place in a bar; Karina has just overheard Marianne Faithfull singing 'It is the evening of the day', and she makes the following declaration, shot in a cool, documentary way, first full-face, then right and left profiles:

"Whatever I do it's impossible for me to avoid my responsibility to another person. My silence acts on him just as much as my words. My departure troubles him as much as my presence. My indifference may bring him disaster as much as my intervention. My sometimes thoughtless concern is fatal to him. Either this life is nothing or else it must be everything. By facing the possibility of losing it rather than submitting it to some action, I place in the very heart of my relative existence an absolute point of reference: morality."

—with which she is armed to go right into the quagmire that will involve her shedding blood. The awareness of what responsibility means in this film is carried much further than in *Vivre sa Vie*, where it was purely interpersonal, rather than social/political. And correspondingly, the pressures are much greater, and can't be resolved as perfectly as in the earlier film. There is a greater disjunctiveness, a more painful

impressionism about the movement of *Made in U.S.A.*, which is reflected in the conclusion where Karina drives away from this hell-city in the car of a friend from a commercial radio station.

She says that fascism (which she has earlier defined to include advertising) will pass away, "like mini-skirts," but that the struggle for a true politic of the left will be a long one. He, a man of the technocratic age, says "The right and the left are both the same, they'll never change: the right because it's stupid and vicious, the left because it's sentimental. Anyway, the idea of right and left is an equation that's totally out of date, you can't see things like that any more."—"How can you see them, then?" she asks, and behind her question, as she speeds along the motorway in this commercial radio car, there seems a more mature awareness of the need to find sources of strength for a long and confusing struggle than in those earlier Godard films which ended in the woman's death.

5 JUST BEFORE ANNA KARINA makes her discovery of responsibility in the bar scene in *Made in U.S.A.*, there has been a very strange sequence about language. It is a discussion between the barman and a workman about whether a sentence is an assemblage of words that makes sense, or whether they are merely useless words (there is a play on the French phrase *faire des phrases*, which is often used about a politician's windblown rhetoric). The worker reels out a list of nonsense sentences to prove that something can be a sentence, in the formal meaning of the word, and yet be senseless: "The glass is not in my wine. The barman is in the pencil's pocket. The floor is being stubbed out on the cigarette. The barman is filling his cigarette with his whisky. He lights his tap," etc.

All of which is one of those Godardesque straight-faced demonstrations by the absurd of a very serious point: that language itself, the confidence one could have in putting any two semantic elements together (whether elements of the written language or visual elements of a film) has broken

down, and the very act of assertion has become self-doubting. This is not only because those who use power badly abuse language also (cf. Orwell on the corruption of words by politics, and Mary McCarthy's Vietnam articles for present proof of same), but because those who can use language well to pierce through to a truth about a situation may find themselves (a) killed, (b) overtaken by a changing situation, (c) less able to stand outside what they are analysing than they believed.

This, therefore, is the question that must be put to every blazing prophet, evangelistic reformer, or indeed, crusading artist: where do you stand, you who say all this? Where did you find the vantage-point from which to speak your denunciations or cries of warning? Hence the best modern works which grapple with deep personal/social/political matters come from artists who have created self-reflexive forms, forms into which their own uncertainties and changeability are built. Peter Weiss. Dick Gregory. Lenny Bruce. In all these cases, and in Godard's self-reflexive films, the man who speaks truth is tainted by its opposite.

6 PETER WATKINS' *PRIVILEGE* hits you hard first time round because it blazes with an animus and anger which is rare in British films. It really does seem to be talking about the structural things that matter in our society—the degree of manipulation that characterises politics as much as advertising and mass-culture. But once you have got over the shock of seeing bishops in recording studios, and the unerringly good casting (though it is a shock to discover that the unbelievably oily PRO and songwriter character is a real-life PRO and songwriter), you begin to ask questions. The futurist parable form first: it's fair to imagine an England where Labour and Tory have buried their hatchets and formed a national coalition whose only problem is to keep the masses happy. But the voice-over commentary that informs us of this situation nudges us

STREET SCENE FROM "PRIVILEGE".





ANNA KARINA IN "MADE IN U.S.A."

uncomfortably, making us ask, where do *you* stand, comrade? And then the level of reality keeps breaking down as imagination subsides into righteously indignant caricature: I've never seen a TV commercial director as pretentious as the one in this film. And the progression of the central character's consciousness is perfunctory: from grim, clenched-teeth submissiveness (OK, so they *could* have ground him down to that state, by constant surveillance of PROs, managers, bodyguards) to hysterical outburst, with scarcely a glimmer of awareness in between. And everyone talking into camera has the manner of talking to a television interviewer, some kind of cosmic Robin Day whom you never see. How does he fit into the scheme, the reality of the film's world?

What remains is a very real and disturbing impulse to *desecrate*—the beat version of Blake's *Jerusalem* sung at the national resurgence rally packs an uncomfortable charge—but this blasphemy never becomes poetry, as it does in Buñuel when he attacks police and priests—I mean that blazing, destructive poetry like a laser-beam. Instead the tone of the film is hysterical, as if Watkins had to blow up his cops and bishops and bankers into huge father-figures before he could attack them. Someone called *Culloden* a 'sado-pacifist' film; I think that here again he's half in love with the thing he hates, and can't acknowledge the ambivalence in the film's structure, so it gets shrill. But at least he's starting to try to dig down to our ugly social roots. The figures for profits or record sales quoted are accurate: the trouble is that in the unformed world of the film, sliding from documentary into fiction, you don't know if you can trust them.

7 "THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM, but you have to try," wrote Empson. Godard has rarely been as scrupulous about his intentions, targets, and methods as in *Deux ou Trois Choses que Je Sais d'Elle*, and has rarely achieved a film in which the manner and difficulty of speaking at all is so insistently present along with the thing spoken. *Privilege* compared with *Deux ou Trois*

Choses is like an anecdotal 1890s canvas with a literary message set beside a Cubist masterpiece, alive with self-questioning. Let me quote two statements by Godard, the first the text of his trailer for the film, the second his run-down of the action:

SILENCE

Learn in silence two or three things that
I know about HER.
HER, the cruelty of neo-capitalism
HER, prostitution
HER, the region of Paris
HER, the bath which 70 per cent of French
people don't have
HER, the terrible law of housing-estates
HER, the physical side of love
HER, life today
HER, the war in Vietnam
HER, the modern call-girl
HER, the death of modern beauty
HER, the circulation of ideas
HER, the Gestapo of structures.

SYNOPSIS: "While the Americans continue to wage an immoral and unjust war in Vietnam, the French government, whose links with international capital are well known, builds round Paris enormous blocks of flats whose inhabitants, whether through boredom or because of the anxiety which this kind of architecture produces, or because of economic needs, are led to practise prostitution, for Americans returning from Vietnam among others. At the same time, this Society, which is building these blocks of flats, distributes, in the form of paperbacks, a cheap culture which is assimilated by the population in a fragmentary and lamentable way. All this goes on among a very loud noise of pile-drivers, motors, cement-mixers, and compressed materials which, to a certain extent, prevents communication."

With *Une Femme Mariée*, Godard began his exploration of signs, slogans, headlines, advertising images. Now he carries this punctuation of the 'three-dimensional' action by printed two-dimensional signs to its furthest degree, setting up a constant *trompe l'oeil* which twists us back to the documentary level at which this human being is no longer a young wife called Juliette but an actress called Marina Vlady—and then pulls focus one degree further, returning us to the flat surface of the screen on which we read print titles, book jackets and street signs constantly becoming anagrams of themselves as he zooms in and out of them. "There is a greater and greater interference by image and language," says Godard's voice in commentary halfway through the film. "One might almost say that to live in society today is something like living inside an enormous comic-strip."

But imagine a comic-strip in depth: for added to this fluctuating stream of thickening and thinning images is a sinuous commentary, spoken by Godard, which is the thread of the whole film, leading us into the fiction, drawing back to watch himself filming, questioning why he should be filming these girls rather than those trees, asking himself where he stands in relation to his camera, the person he is filming, the society, the time of day, the universe. And the tone of this commentary is not the nudging, salesman-like tone of the Peter Watkins commentary: it continues as it begins, in a whisper, urgent, tentative, trying to find a purchase in a world governed by the grind of bulldozers and the roar of trucks. This is what I mean by self-reflexive: it is a voice which can say the firm uncomfortable things about social and political structure that need saying, and also recognise that it is in some sense a victim of what it denounces, as we all are. Two extracts from the commentary will serve to make the point:

COMMENTARY 3: "I deduce that the Gaullist regime adopts the mask of the reformer and moderniser while it really only wants to perpetuate and regularise the natural tendencies of high capital. I also deduce that, by systematising the cult of planning and centralisation, this same regime underlines the distortions of the economy, and even more of the daily morality on which it is based."

COMMENTARY 13: "The world alone today, where revolutions are impossible, where bloody wars threaten me, where capitalism is no longer sure of its rights . . . and the working class is in retreat, where progress . . . where the astonishing progress of science makes future centuries weigh oppressively upon us . . . where the future is more present than the present, where distant galaxies are at my door. 'Mon semblable, mon frère . . . Where does it begin? . . . Where does what begin? God created the heavens and the earth. Of course . . . but that's a bit simple, too easy. One should be able to say more . . . Say that the limits of my language are those of my world. That as I speak, I limit the world, I end it . . . and when logical and mysterious death comes to abolish this limit . . . and there will be no more questions, no more answers . . . everything will be amorphous. But should things become clear again, that can only be through the appearance of conscience. And then, everything picks up again."

The two poets have merged: David Goodis and Richard P are one. And the image which accompanies this latter text is an unbelievably close close-up of the whirling froth on a cup of espresso, so close that it fills the whole screen and when a grain of sugar is dropped in, revealing the dark coffee beneath, it seems like the swirling of the heavenly bodies themselves. This image, occurring at the end of a sequence which began perfectly realistically in a bar, sums up the method of the film. Again and again, a scene begins which tells some part of the simple plot of the film—how Juliette takes to prostitution. We see her in her flat, her husband listening to his ham radio set (Jules Feiffer's parody of Johnson coming over the headphones); we see her leave her child in a sort of crèche so she can pick up clients on the street; we see her take a young man

to a hotel room, go with a girl friend to an appointment with an American war correspondent on leave; take the family Mini to a carwash; climb into bed with her husband.

And each of these scenes is not there to keep the story moving, to be captured realistically. In each of them, Godard moves out, drawing in other strands, through his commentary, through direct address by the actor into the camera, through surrealist details—the apartment that serves as a crèche is papered with alluring travel posters, materialising the temptations of foreign travel. It is as if Godard took this anecdote—which came originally from a press exposé on prostitution among housewives—as if he had passed it through a retort and come out with a quintessence in which the observed and the observer were inextricably, poignantly married.

"I want to be able sometimes," he writes, "to make you feel far from the person when I do a close-up. And when I do a long-shot, an establishing shot, then sometimes, not always but sometimes, I want to give the feeling of being very close to the people . . . A film like this, it's a bit as if I wanted to write a sociological essay in the form of a novel, and all I had to do it with was notes of music. Is that what the cinema is? And am I right to continue doing it?"

Deux ou Trois Choses traces the malaise of its characters, actors and maker, stuck in this uncomfortable comic we have made of our world and our cities. It has a form—the form of inspired collage—which can encompass absurdist actions (Flaubert's heartbreaking polymaths Bouvard and Pécuchet turn up in a café sequence, ploughing through mountains of books), fragments of direct documentary interview, a fictional story, and a sustained, anxious meditation, in a stream of rich and rigorous imagery. The opposing categories of the brown envelope and the novel, public and private, without and within, dissolve into something incandescent.

Every considerable artist proposes his own unique angle of vision. Godard, of all the film-makers I have mentioned in these thoughts, goes deepest in forging his. He is the Blake of the modern cinema, "seeing through not with the eye," its Rimbaud, operating "a reasoned disordering of the senses." And now he is moving out of the kind of privacy which was a threat for both of those poets, and making films which are indissolubly personal and public.

COMMENTARY 23: "The birth in the human world of the simplest things, man's spirit taking possession of them . . . a new world where both men and things will have a harmonious relationship. There's my goal. When you come down to it, it's as much political as it is poetic. In any event, it explains the rage for expression. Whose? Mine. Me, writer and painter."

Meanwhile in England, we are still seeking our Cubist/Cuban revolution.

"JUST LOOK AT THE MESS YOU'VE MADE, WILSON!" (28 FEBRUARY 1966). CARTOON REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE NEW STATESMAN AND ALLEN LANE, THE PENGUIN PRESS.



Jacques Brunius

"PARTIE DE CAMPAGNE".



WHEN JACQUES BRUNIUS DIED on April 24th, one realised all at once just how greatly one had valued him, how many things one had forgotten to ask him and neglected to talk over with him. And one realised just how important a person he was. This, though, is exactly the point: he was important as a *person*, first and foremost, rather than specifically as a writer, a critic, a director or an actor, though he was all these things and a great many more things besides. The focus of his seemingly endless range of interests and accomplishments and ideas and imaginings was Brunius himself rather than any particular branch of his activities. If he can be categorised at all, it is not by profession, but by credo. From first to last he was a surrealist, and surrealism is the continuing thread that linked all his interests and activities. He was attached to the movement from his late teens (he was born in 1906), and at the very moment he died he was busy with the Surrealist Exhibition in Exeter. In 1962, when I had unwisely referred to Buñuel as the sole survivor of surrealism, he wrote me a very indignant letter:

"What do you mean . . . ? Of course journalists have said that surrealism was dead, but they have kept repeating that very same obituary *since the days of its inception*. I should have thought you were not of the kind to believe what you read in the papers! Surrealism is very much alive and has never stopped to be alive . . . Please never believe what 'they' say."

It was as a surrealist that he welcomed *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*—in his astonishing feat of critical analysis, "Every Year in Marienbad," in *SIGHT AND SOUND*—as "the greatest film ever made." It was for him a surreal dream palace to twin the enchanted folly created by the Facteur Cheval. Here was "the film I had been waiting for during the last thirty years. A brief glance at my own writings on the cinema reminded me that I had advocated the making of films following a mental process, and shown that it was not only possible but desirable. A number of films indicated the way: *Caligari*, *Sherlock Junior*, *Peter Ibbetson*, *Berkeley Square*, *Un Chien Andalou*, *L'Age d'Or*, *Citizen Kane*, *La Règle du Jeu* and a few others perhaps . . ." The point of the film to him was that it created "a mental continuity, a continuity of thought, instead of the usual factual-spatial continuity." The whole article, apart from revealing much about Brunius' fascination with the surreal possibilities of film, was very characteristic of his ability to throw out highly provocative, not to say provoking, ideas whose apparently extravagant claims he would proceed to back up with the sort of cool logic and agility which is always associated with French critical writing, and rarely found in it.

* * *

Brunius was born in Paris, and originally intended to be a scientist. He studied aeronautics and interested himself in

the design of aeroplanes and cars, though subsequently he eccentrically declared his private war on the internal combustion engine (he was not often so impractical). He never quite lost his scientific curiosity; he was very taken by transistors in the pioneer days, and I still have two elegant radios made out of cigarette boxes which he gave me to try out. By 1929 aeronautics were behind him and he was moving in a much more wide-open world, writing (as Bernard Brunius or Jacques Borel) for cinema and surrealist reviews. Kyrrou values him as "the only surrealist writer who has systematically occupied himself with cinematographic theory." The basis of this theory, as Brunius told Kyrrou, was that "I have never been interested in form except in relation to content." This was why his most admired directors remained Buñuel and Renoir, until Resnais, all of whom "gave the container the simplest possible form."

Brunius entered the cinema proper at the end of the Twenties, working as assistant to Clair and his brother, Henri Chomette, to Buñuel (on *L'Âge d'Or*), to Prévert (*L'Affaire est dans le Sac*) and to Renoir (*Partie de Campagne*). With the last two directors he acted; and the lugubrious man in search of a beret, and the prancing fisherman-faun, are among the most memorable figures from the French cinema of the Thirties. Brunius acted a good deal in later years, but the British cinema managed to reduce him to a character accent player, and the old style was only momentarily captured when he was able to direct himself—as an old silent-movie villain—in a film he made for the Children's Film Foundation, *To the Rescue* (1953).

The shorts he directed in France in the early Thirties are unknown here, though the surrealists place as high a value on his purely commercial and travelogue shorts (*Voyage aux Cyclades*, 1931, *Autour d'une Evasion*, 1933, *Venezuela*, 1937) as upon *Elle est Bicimidine* (with Edmond Gréville, 1927) or *Records 37* (1937), which is said to contain Brunius' most important experiments in "cinéma sonore total". Although ultimately he was dissatisfied with certain aspects of *Violons d'Ingres* (1939), this was certainly his most important film and in many ways his testament. Ironically it is nowadays almost completely overlooked, simply because the original and novel techniques he developed in it have been imitated by the art film until they have become a commonplace.

Made for the French Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939, the film is a collection of the often eccentric outlets which people seek, quite outside their regular line of work, as Ingres used to creep away to play the violin. It is a panorama of Sunday painters and weekend scientists, with the principal sequences devoted to Douanier Rousseau and Facteur Cheval. Cheval—the postman who around the turn of the century created a fantastic grotto palace in his garden—was a lifelong hero of Brunius (he was to have lectured about Cheval at Exeter), for Cheval was the perfect surrealist, inscribing on his enchanted walls messages from dreams: "Les Fées d'Orient viennent fraterniser avec l'Occident . . ." *Violons d'Ingres* ends with images of sky and stars, and over Jaubert's fine music the conclusion: "Une ardeur commune en ces hommes les plus divers fait de leurs vies un jeu passionné. Le science et l'art naissent de ses jeux. Il n'est de science, n'est d'art que grâce à ceux qui, parvenus à l'expérience de l'âge mûr, savent conserver leur curiosité avide et créatrice de l'enfance."

This curiosity Brunius pre-eminently retained, and with it an astonishing power of seeing the connection between the most seemingly disparate things (again, of course, the ultimate connection and focus was Brunius himself): Méliès, the Goons, old optical toys, eccentrics, sewing machines, new film-makers, Keaton, Tod Browning, Feuillade, Alice (Brunius arranged a day-long programme for RTF to celebrate the

Alice centenary), music hall, obscure painters, frustrated scientists and anything and everything that could in any way excite the senses.

The tragedy of Brunius, for us at least, is that he was so much a man of projects. The film world being what it is, the films he was actually able to make were too often commissioned chores in which he was only able by flashes to communicate his strange vision. One recalls for instance the total surprise of the opening of *Brief City*, his tribute to the Festival of Britain, a dream prospect of wind-whirled litter wrapping itself around the bleak ghost of the former pleasure-ground. But the scenarios he never realised included *Chevaux blancs, dragons et géants des collines de craie en Angleterre*, and adaptations of Huysmans' *Là-Bas*, of Gauthier's *Spirite*, of Le Fanu's *Room in the Flying Dragon*, of Mathurin's *Melmoth*, of Chamisso's *The Man Who Lost his Shadow*.

The consolation is that he still managed to achieve a lot more than most of us ever do in our lifetimes. The films he completed, his criticism (whether written or invigorating the BBC's critical forums), his performances, can at no point be disregarded. And from the time that Cavalcanti brought him to this country to work for the GPO Film Unit, he worked endlessly to bridge the cultural gaps between the British (whom he enjoyed immensely, if with occasional exasperation) and his own country. He worked a great deal (largely with Olwen Vaughan and the New London Film Society) to educate British audiences to the French film (making firm divisions between the people he approved of and those he did not: he made no mystery of his feelings, for instance, for Epstein, Gance and L'Herbier, whom he considered, by and large, phoney; and Cocteau, whom he reckoned a smart plagiarist). His discrimination and his translations did much to introduce the new generation of British dramatists to French audiences; his version of James Saunders' *Next Time I'll Sing to You* opened at the Théâtre Antoine in September last year and is still running.

Through it all, he was an utterly consistent person, of unfaltering honesty, integrity, reliability, loyalty. A rich humorist as well. And he died, enviably, engrossed and busy with what he most enjoyed doing. Though he would have been furious at the interruption.

DAVID ROBINSON

THE FACTEUR CHEVAL'S ENCHANTED PALACE. STILL FROM "LES VIOLONS D'INGRES", TAKEN FROM THE FRAME BY HAROLD BROWN OF THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE.



Festivals 67 CANNES



"SPECIAL PRIORITY TRAINS".

THE MAIN TROUBLE with this year's Cannes Festival was that it just did not have enough really bad films. With any festival as packed with films as Cannes always is, one can ask for no better than that choices should be black-and-white. A film should either be good, holding, original, promising or something equally positive, or it should announce its awfulness unequivocally in the first ten minutes or so, thereby saving a lot of wear and tear on critical nerves. Instead, unoblingly, this year's films hit a steady level of respectable mediocrity which kept critics stolidly in their seats for an hour and a half or two hours, to stumble out feeling that the time had not, perhaps, been entirely ill-spent, but had certainly not been spent well enough. Perhaps, after all, that Brazilian/Swedish/Greek film in the *marché du film* which some native spoke well of would have been better worth while. Except that those who had risked it generally came back ready to congratulate one on the wisdom of one's own choice. And amid all this mere competence, all these good intentions, hardly anything to thrill, surprise or even get people talking.

In this, as it turned out, the British critics were getting the worst of the deal, since practically all the films which surprised and delighted or shocked the festival at large were British. For others *Accident*, or *Blow-Up*, or *Ulysses*, or *Dutchman*, or even *Privilege*, might do the trick; but we wanted our thrills from elsewhere, and they were few and far between. Apart from the 'British' Antonioni and Losey, almost none of the world's major directors were represented, either because, like Fellini, they had no film ready, or, like Bergman, they would not compete in festivals anyhow, or, like Buñuel, for more

inscrutable reasons. Admittedly, there was one shining exception to the rule, Bresson, whose *Mouchette*, if not conceivably a festival winner, is none the less a masterpiece compared with which practically everything else in the festival looked just a little flashy and cheap.

It takes Bresson back to *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne* country: literary adaptation, and again of Bernanos. Again it is an adaptation which is often dangerously, fanatically literal: the book is not so much adapted as transferred to the screen, with some rearrangement of its external events but no radical change. And yet it works perfectly, to produce a film which could hardly be less literary in tone. In his book on Bernanos Albert Béguin debates the question of whether this bare, unadorned account of the last few hours and suicide of a semi-literate peasant girl, into which no mention of God or the Church ever intrudes, can be regarded as a religious work or not, and concludes that it can, because divine compassion is implied in the author's (and so our) angle of vision. It sounds like special pleading, but in the film one sees exactly what he means. There is no extraneous sentiment, and no attempt at explanation (as there is in the book). Instead the happenings follow one another with unquestioning inevitability as *Mouchette*, a sturdy and deliberately unlovable heroine, makes her way almost unswervingly towards her destiny. It should be depressing, and yet Bresson treats it all with such radiant ease and grace that the end, *Mouchette's* suicide, is more like an epiphany than an annihilation.

Nothing else, certainly, on quite that level. And hardly anything which might qualify as a new revelation. One of the

French films was by a new director, Nadine Trintignant's *Mon Amour . . . Mon Amour*, but that proved to be one of the few which signalled its nature in the opening minutes. In the first shot, to be exact, in which hero and heroine (Jean-Louis Trintignant and Valérie Lagrange, ex of *Un Homme et une Femme*) stand facing each other from either end of the wide screen, photographed on top of what looks like a sea-wall, the sky behind, in soapy, cool-rinsed colour, and then start to move slowly towards each other to the tinkling strains of a score by Francis Lai (ex of *Un Homme et une Femme*). The Lelouch film was pseudo, but it worked; Mme. Trintignant's pseudo-pseudo is quite a bit too much to take.

The other French entry was more appealing: Alain Jessua's *Jeu de Massacre*, if not quite as rich and dense as his first feature, *La Vie à l'Envers*, is at least highly original and not noticeably like the work of anyone else in the French cinema at present. In a sense it continues the earlier film's consideration of the role of illusion in modern life. In *La Vie à l'Envers* the hero withdrew altogether into his private world (which proved to be a madhouse, but a madhouse where he was happy). Here, on the contrary, the hero starts by informing us that, as a result of the experiences he is about to relate, he has fallen out of love with the dream; he intends instead to take the real world, the world of happenings. As it transpires, he is not being quite honest with us, or with himself; if he is not trapped in a dream, he is at least trapped into being a dream-factory for someone else.

At the start he is an only moderately successful novelist and writer of strip cartoons, for which his wife draws the pictures. Then he meets his ideal audience, a half-crazy young man who lives vicariously all the comic-book heroes' adventures, and asks for nothing better than to be given a continuous supply of them, cut to his own personal obsessions. This our hero sets out to provide, at first as a sort of game, then in deadly earnest, for money, at the behest of the young man's rich mother. The young man eventually attempts to live out his ready-packaged fantasies in fact, with nearly disastrous results. And so, he learns his lesson, and when we last see him is content to live in fantasy for ever. But our hero? Is he any better off? Perhaps his final and most damaging fantasy is that he is free from fantasy, free to live in a world of real actions; for after all, he is shut up in a madhouse just as effectively as was the hero of *La Vie à l'Envers*.

It is, obviously, a superior, intelligent film (unless you insist on drawing general conclusions on Jessua's behalf from the particular special case he presents). It is often funny, pretty to look at, remarkably discreet when you think what extravaganzas of pop-art modishness such a subject would probably inspire in any card-holding member of the British new wave. It is also just a trifle too finely drawn out, with some *longueurs* towards the middle and unappealing leading performances from Jean-Pierre Cassel and Claudine Auger. Still, the film, if not perhaps quite the follow-up to *La Vie à l'Envers* we might have wished, confirms a real talent.

It is not strictly accurate to say that the festival held no discoveries. There was one: Jiri Menzel's *Ostre Sledovane Vlaky* (Special Priority Trains). Menzel has made a number of shorts previously, including the very strange first episode of *Pearls from the Depths*, "The Death of Mr. Balthasar". This feature shows many of the same characteristics: a visual fascination with machines and how they work, a passion, shared by several of the new Czech directors but here carried to extremes, for photographing things flat on, with as little effect of perspective as possible. Perhaps for this reason the film has been classified as another pointilliste Czech comedy-drama, with little continuity or forward movement but lots of lovingly observed moments. Obviously, the film has certain points in common with those of Forman, Juracek and Passer; but it also has many differences. In fact, quite a lot happens in it. Its young hero takes on his first job at his village railway station, has his first unfortunate brush with sex, attempts suicide, recovers, manages sex better the second time, and in the end dies in an act of sabotage. Not to mention strands of subplot involving the sub-stationmaster's ingenious erotic play with the station's rubber stamps and its complicated sequel.

Menzel's extremely even pacing, the constantly cool ironic



JESSUA'S "JEU DE MASSACRE".

eye he turns on what happens in front of his camera, are means of keeping a lot of extravagant, potentially farcical, melodramatic or fantastic material in order, and preventing it from bursting the seams of the film. Passer's way in *Intimate Lighting*, to which this film has been compared, is rather the opposite, an attempt to make the treatment give extra interest and significance to what is basically very thin, slight material. This may explain why the Menzel film has, for all its lightness and charm, so much more body than most of the other films in the new Czech cinema: the feeling that it is being pruned and compressed rather than spread out thin and gracefully, calculatingly laid out for our inspection. Scene after scene is wonderfully memorable: the rubber-stamp seduction, which for real erotic feeling leaves the Swedish cinema standing; the boy's self-revelation to an older married woman while she enigmatically continues forcibly feeding a goose; the arrival of the glamorous female spy who will initiate him; the boy's death, so beautifully casual and unexpected in the midst of a farcical enquiry about something far different. In any festival the film would have shone; here it was a beacon.

What else? Nothing much really. A press conference given by Jerry Lewis, who just happened to be there, which was informative and at the same time a dazzling demonstration of audience mastery. Rumours of enticing obscenities on the festival fringe which never seemed to be borne out by the facts. Ulysses garnering vast amounts of publicity and provoking over-heated speculation from the many who had not

WIDERBERG'S "ELVIRA MADIGAN".



seen it. Monstrous entries from countries like Mexico and Brazil which should know better by now but evidently don't. A rather nice film from Denmark (with Swedish and Icelandic participation), Gabriel Axel's *The Red Cloak*, which had some striking rocky landscapes and did manage intermittently to capture something of the real primitive saga quality. An episode-film from Sweden called *Stimulantia*, in which, as the invitation put it, "eight directors among Ingmar Bergman" (sounds like rather a good description of the Swedish cinema at large) dealt with subjects in which they found stimulation. A couple of them suggested rather brusquely in their introductions that the main stimulation was the money; Bergman's was the face of his own son during his first two years of life, captured in colour home movies and re-edited for the occasion. Most of the rest (including Jörn Donner, Vilgot Sjöman and Gustav Molander) were at least likeable, though the Molander, positively his last film he tells us, made too much to-do over that old Maupassant "La Parure" in order to justify the presence of Ingrid Bergman.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR is right about the middling selection of films at Cannes this year; but arriving at the Festival a few days before he did and staying a few days longer, I managed to find a few good things that escaped him. Not that I found so many—three films, to be exact: one first feature, and two from established directors.

There is always to my mind something faintly ridiculous about Swedish sex films, and this is perhaps why I so enjoyed *Puss & Kram*. Disappointingly, the title translates as only *Hugs and Kisses*, but there is no disappointment in this first film by a young Swedish film and theatre critic called Jonas Cornell. Mostly, I suspect, because Cornell sees the joke, too, in this tale of a very Swedish *ménage à trois*; his countrymen, on the other hand, don't seem to think it funny at all—which is perhaps why the five Anglo-Saxons at a poorly attended *Marché du Film* show were all rolling in the aisles. With our prejudices, we all came out saying 'Pinter', and it is true that perhaps our Harold would not disavow the script, with its characteristic use of silences between cryptic remarks, its sudden changes of tone, and most of all its ultimate reversal of the master-servant relationship. But it is not just a good script; Cornell has got a clean, cool style of film-making

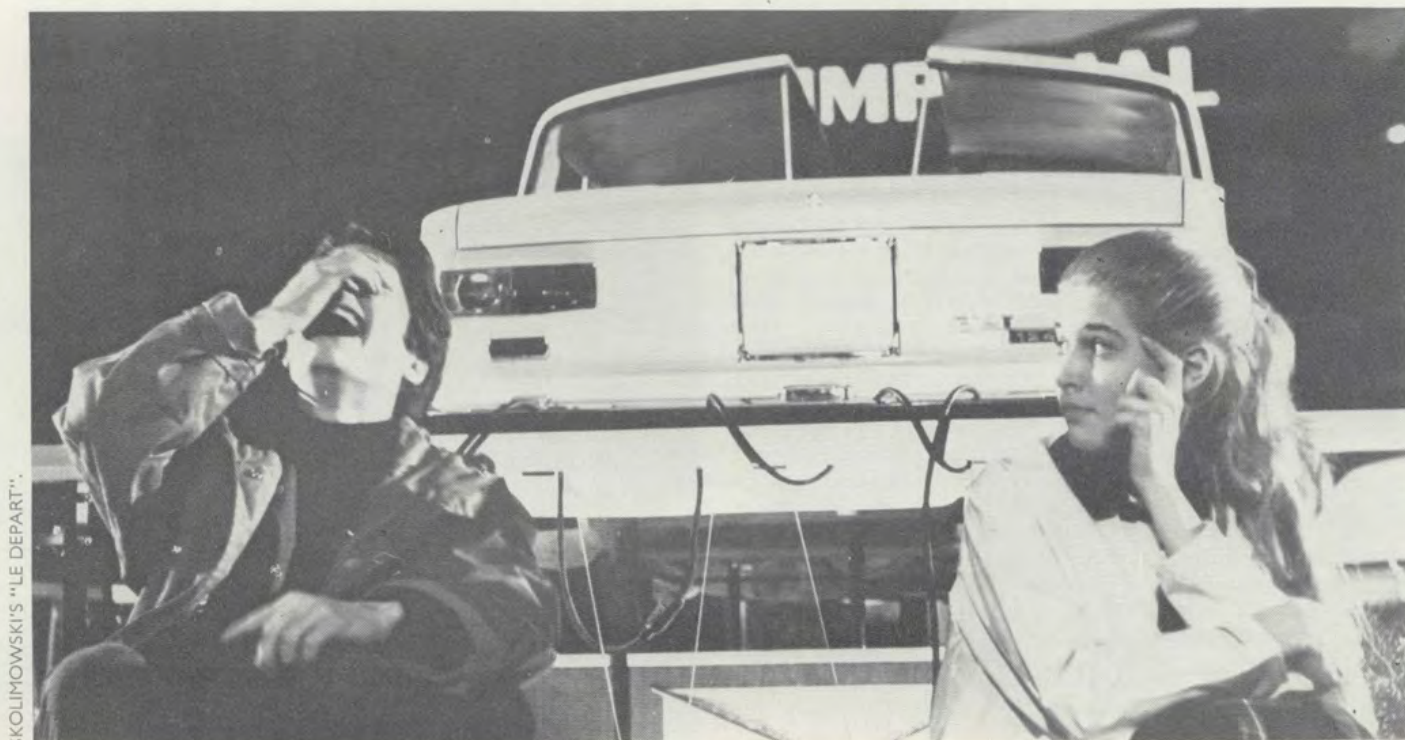
which beautifully suits his implausible trio: husband, wife, and what you might call a male au pair girl of thirty.

Bo Widerberg's last two films were rather disappointing, so how nice to be able to report that *Elvira Madigan* is something of a triumph. A carefully muted triumph: both subject and treatment are consciously limited. Based on a true story of the Nineties which has apparently found a lasting place in Swedish folklore, *Elvira Madigan* is practically a two-character film: as the old ballad runs: "A young lieutenant/nobly born/ran away/from wife and children with Elvira Madigan." Or, more crudely, an army officer elopes with a tightrope dancer; they live out a brief idyll during one summer. But love outside society, Widerberg is saying, cannot long survive, and the sun-drenched landscapes, Elvira's white and yellow gowns, and the raspberries and cream on which they imprudently live while their money runs out, only serve to reinforce the elegiac quality of their story. "All too soon," the ballad concludes, "their bliss is over/and their lives/they scorned to save/so Elvira/and her lover/sought a refuge in the grave."

Thommy Berggren (Widerberg's favourite actor) plays the lieutenant, while Elvira is a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl called Pia Dagermark. Undoubtedly one of the most beautiful girls in all cinema, she won the festival prize for the best actress. Strictly speaking, she didn't deserve it, but, faced with their usual problems of geographical distribution, the Jury found this the only way it could reward Widerberg. An acting prize, however, doesn't adequately recognise the Mozartian lyricism of the film, its beautifully doomed colour photography, and Widerberg's *coup* in bringing off the slightest of scenarios with the sound of muted trumpets.

I have been an admirer of Skolimowski all the way back to *Rysopis*, but I couldn't help feeling that his third film, *Barrier*, displayed two disturbing tendencies: an indigestion of Godard (he had perhaps seen *Pierrot le Fou* once too often), and some indulgent wallowing in the 'Polish problem', of which even the Poles must be heartily sick by now. But with *Le Départ*, his fourth film, he is not only back on top of his form; he has, I think, surpassed himself. Poland is left far behind in this French-speaking Belgian film; and in spite of the fact that he has used both the two stars (Jean-Pierre Léaud and Catherine Duport) and the cameraman (Willy Kurant) of Godard's *Masculin Féminin*, he has made his most personal film. It is about a young man who works as a hairdresser's assistant but whose only interest in life is driving fast cars; the action of the

(Continued on page 157)



SKOLIMOWSKI'S "LE DÉPART".

IN THE PICTURE

Blast and Counterblast

ALMOST SIX MONTHS after the publication of Knight and Porter's ACTT-backed report *A Long Look at Short Films*, and seven months after the Monopolies Commission had pointed the finger at *Look at Life*, the Rank Organisation replied. In the middle of May, in a glossy-covered twenty-pager, firmly entitled *No Case for Compulsion*, Mr. John Davis, Rank's chief executive, lambasted socialised cinema: "In brief, what is envisaged is a world in which producers can concentrate on the films they want to make without the distraction of considering what films the audience want to see."

Apart from Mr. Davis's foreword, and a rebuttal of points made in the ACTT report, the Rank pamphlet contained the suggestion that the Film Producers Association should conduct market research to see if shorts have a genuine place in cinema programmes. If they had, the Rank Organisation was prepared to make what it called "a substantial contribution" to a fund to finance the production of short films by independent producers.

Reaction at first was what Whitehall PROs describe as 'cautious'. Derrick Knight, co-author of the ACTT report, said that obviously Rank was under pressure from the Monopolies Commission and the Board of Trade. Nevertheless it was "a step in the right direction." Later, positions hardened. The Short Film-makers Campaign said there was little need for research and that the proposed fund was a duplication of the BFI's Production Fund (ex-Experimental Film Fund). The problem was that under the present system there was no room in cinemas for short films.

Characteristically the Boultings couldn't resist making a statement, and as usual it was colourful copy. The Rank pamphlet, they said, was an expensive apologia for *Look at Life*. Hollywood had tried market research and found it wanting because it could not forecast what people's taste might be. Rank's proposals were "relevant to the marketing of patent pills but not motion pictures," and the pamphlet advocated the "discredited in order to placate the undernourished." "We hope," the Boultings added, "it won't delay the Board of Trade's film legislation."

Meanwhile, it is no secret that the Film Producers Association had been looking into the short film situation long before



SERGE ROULET'S "LE MUR", FROM SARTRE'S SPANISH CIVIL WAR STORY.

Rank's public suggestion. For one thing, there are those of its members who produce feature films and may be scared that some of their Eady money cream might be syphoned off to succour shorts. Campaign activists say that a FPA sub-committee has already pushed through a proposal that the industry should buy off short film producers with a fund of about £100,000 a year to finance a dozen 30-minute pictures by young hopefuls. This, say the cynics, could be a sop to conscience and might head off legislation. The thinking behind the move, they uncharitably claim, is that if people will watch *Look at Life* for eight years, they will put up with experimental films, and that £100,000 is a small price to pay to prevent Government intervention.

It now seems up to Rank (and ABPC, who chimed in concurring with the Rank proposals a day later) to show that they mean business. Mr. Davis is right when he says films need to be tailored to a market. It remains to be seen if Rank and ABPC now offer the market, and if short film makers can and will do a bit of tailoring.

IAN WRIGHT

Peckinpah in from the Cold

SAM PECKINPAH thinks he'll soon be coming in from the cold. The role of *cinéaste maudit* doesn't particularly please him and he thinks he has learned the lesson since the *Major Dundee* misadventure and *The Cincinnati Kid* blow-up. "Let's say I've been blacklisted," he grins, "let's also say that I've realised I'm over 21 and had signed contracts. Sometimes we believe what we want to believe and not the facts. My job is first to understand other people and not theirs to understand me."

Peckinpah hasn't been idle since *The Cincinnati Kid* two years ago, where he was fired off the film one week into shooting by producer Martin Ransohoff and replaced by Norman Jewison, who wisely decided to start all over again. Peckinpah wrote the screenplay for *The Glory Guys* and badly wanted to direct it. Arnold Laven was

chosen instead. He is now finishing the script of *Villa Rides*, in which Yul Brynner will play Pancho Villa and Robert Mitchum his revolutionary partner; and again Peckinpah hopes. "It's a brutal script, those cats were tough. They had great humour and great pride involved with a contempt for death. The picture will be shot in Spain because Villa is still politically touchy in Mexico."

He has also worked in movies-for-television. He directed *Noon Wine*, starring Jason Robards, for ABC's prestige programme *Stage '67*, bringing it in on budget and schedule. For the Bob Hope Show he directed *The Lady is My Wife*. With Robards he has a film project, *Cabel Hogue*, and with Swedish actor Per Oscarsson he plans to film James Gould Cozzens' *The Castaway*.

Peckinpah is part Indian and third generation Californian, and the appeal of the Western as an art form has never flagged. It has been said that his most famous film, *Guns in the Afternoon*, reflects the influence of the Westerns Randolph Scott made with Budd Boetticher and those Joel McCrea made with Jacques Tourneur, but Peckinpah doesn't particularly like the Westerns of either director. "Ford, of course, I revere. This may surprise you, but I admire Michael Curtiz, especially *The Breaking Point*. I've seen *High Noon* fifteen times. *Shane* is marvellous—the best Western ever made."

AXEL MADSEN

True to Sartre

SERGE ROULET: you probably don't know the name, but you soon will. He is forty years old, and has had a varied career in films: working with Flaherty, cameraman in Israel, assistant to Bresson on *Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*, prizewinner at Cannes in 1964 for a short (*Sillages*) which he made for the French Tourist Office. Now Roulet has directed his first feature, an adaptation of Sartre's *Le Mur*. Strikingly faithful in both spirit and letter to Sartre's original, *Le Mur*

impressed everyone who saw it at a recent press screening by its stylistic mastery. It is austere, reticent—and very accomplished.

In France, as elsewhere, a director trying to make his first feature has to break through a vicious circle. Perhaps he can secure one of the dozen or so stars whose name carries weight with distributors. Or he can try for finance through the system of advances on receipts, rather parsimoniously doled out by the Centre Nationale du Cinéma. But an original scenario doesn't stand much chance unless there's the cachet of a famous name.

Tired of accumulating unrealised projects, Roullet asked Sartre's permission to adapt *Le Mur*. Sartre, whose preoccupations are seldom directed towards the past, suggested that he might submit an outline. So Roullet went ahead, and produced something which so satisfied Sartre that he agreed to put his own name to the dialogue—most of which, in any case, comes straight from the original. Everyone probably knows the story, of three Spanish Republicans (one of them a member of the International Brigade), sentenced to death by the Falange and spending their last night in the unwelcome company of a Belgian doctor who is taking notes on their physiological reactions.

Le Mur is primarily a meditation by man on his own death, in an evocation of past, present, and perhaps future; and out of Sartre's themes Roullet has fashioned a soberly stunning film. It is influenced, certainly, by Bresson, whom Roullet considers the greatest French director, but its stylistic echoes of *Un Condamné à Mort* reflect only credit on both film-makers. In any case, one might call this the work of a left-wing Bresson; the film's moral tone and colouring are very different from those of *Un Condamné*. Sartre's own view is that here, for the first time, he totally recognises himself on the screen. "*Cette angoisse*," he wrote to Roullet, "*je la disais, mais vous nous la faites subir*."

The committee responsible for recommending Festival entries to André Malraux considered this rich and generous film for Cannes; and turned it down (unanimously except for one dissenter) on the grounds of

possible offence to Spain. It was thus left to the Festival's *Conseil d'Administration* to fail to invite it. Which they did. Whether *Le Mur* goes to Berlin, Moscow or Venice (and I bring it to the attention of Giulio Cesare Castello, my fellow SIGHT AND SOUND correspondent and, I believe, a member of the Venice committee), the important thing is that it should soon reach the ordinary, public cinema screens.

GILLES JACOB

Oberhausen Revisited

YOU HAVE TO GET used to Oberhausen. The first time can be traumatic, but once you realise that this short film festival is organised along lines which have more to do with national representation and social uplift than with strictly aesthetic criteria, you can settle down to make your own selection from their selection. One forgets the aberrations: last year there was a concentration on films about the problems of the aged in almost every country you could think of; this year, fortuitously no doubt, the accent was on coal-miners. Just as boring, but less depressing. And generally speaking, the documentaries were the least interesting entries.

Cinéma-vérité, alas, is not dead, so we had dozens of shorts in which someone unburdened his soul straight to camera. The result, being 'true', was supposed also to be beautiful. Plato and Keats notwithstanding, it didn't often work out that way. However, there was an amusing Hungarian film about a mass screen test, a charming Danish one about a 'junk playground' and best of all, the prize-winner in this category, *12-12-42*. Already shown at the London Festival, this American short is an imaginative attack on the Johnsonian concept of 'The Great Society', substituting wit and bite for the usual flatly pious statements.

Animated films came out the best: *Au Fou*, Yoji Kuri's Charles Addams' vision of the war between men and women; the Hungarian *Five Minute Thriller*, a bang-bang catalogue of the various ways people can murder each other; the Polish *Every-*

thing's a Number, a refreshing exercise in free-form mathematics. The best was the Yugoslav *The Fly*, which quite properly won the Grand Prix in its category. A terrifying projection of what might happen if insects ever got to be as big as men, calling out all one's obscure fears of predatory bugs, it really succeeded in harrowing its audience.

There were fewer successes in the fiction category. *Galaxis* was a German science-fiction anecdote about a time in the future when, women outnumbering men, three girls are seen carefully choosing a collective mate. The prize-winner in the fiction category was a Swedish film called *Stop-over in the Marshland*: an excessively whimsical effort about a railroad worker who quits his job to spend a few hours meditating in the middle of nowhere. I much preferred a French film called *Le Voyage*. Austere, almost abstractly edited, it follows a young mother and her three children on their way north from Calabria to rejoin their father who has got a job in Milan. Finally, an old favourite of mine, Robert Preston's *Son of Dada* (shown at the 1965 London Film Festival), won the Grand Prix in the experimental category.

RICHARD ROUD

Work in Progress

Great Britain

KEVIN BILLINGTON: Moves from his brilliant TV documentaries to big screen features with *The Rose Lounge*, produced by David Deutsch from an original screenplay by Lee Langley. A love story about a woman journalist and a young orchestral conductor, starring Barbara Ferris and Oskar Werner. For Columbia.

KAREL REISZ: Planning *Isadora*, based on the life of Isadora Duncan, but with the emphasis more on drama than biography. To star Vanessa Redgrave.

TONY RICHARDSON: *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, with screenplay by John Osborne and Charles Wood. Turkish locations involving the Turkish Presidential Guard; Lila de Nobili as colour consultant, John Mollo as military costume consultant and period researcher. Also animated period drawings by Richard Williams. Starring Trevor Howard, Vanessa Redgrave, John Gielgud. Woodfall.

France

LOUIS MALLE: *William Wilson*, first episode of *Histoires Extraordinaires*, based on stories by Edgar Allan Poe. Alain Delon stars as the man haunted by a double—his conscience. With Brigitte Bardot. Later episodes planned for Roger Vadim (*Metzengerstein*, with Laurent Terzieff and Jane Fonda) and Orson Welles (*The Tell-Tale Heart*). Marceau-Cocinor.

ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET: *L'Homme qui Ment*, story set in a remote mountain village visited by a stranger mysteriously involved with one of the local men who disappeared during the war. Como Films.

U.S.A.

JOHN FRANKENHEIMER: *The Extraordinary Seaman*, comedy about four American sailors adrift in the Pacific during World War Two. With David Niven, Mickey Rooney. John Frankenheimer-Edward Lewis Productions for Columbia.

STANLEY KRAMER: *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, a problem for Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn as parents whose daughter wants to marry Sidney Poitier. Columbia.

MIKE NICHOLS: Film version of Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, starring Alan Arkin. Filmways for Paramount.

MARCELLO MASTROIANNI IN VISCONTI'S "LO STRANIERO", HIS ADAPTATION OF CAMUS' NOVEL "THE OUTSIDER".





MR. W. C. FIELDS.

Dukinfield meets McGargle

by David
Robinson

CREATION OF A CHARACTER



"THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY". THE SMALL PHOTOGRAPH COMES FROM A LONDON COLISEUM CHARITY PROGRAMME OF 1913. BERNHARDT PLAYED PHEDRE; FIELDS GAVE "A DISPLAY OF REMARKABLE PYRAMID SHOTS".

W C. FIELDS, AS THE RECENT orgiastic National Film Theatre season reminded us, was a most paradoxical fellow, in every aspect of his life, his creation and his character. Not least paradoxical is the startling modernity, in the Sixties, of his black, brutal and fantastic humour; for Fields was by choice, as well as by chronology, a Victorian. He was born in 1879, the son of a poor cockney emigré, James Dukinfield. His childhood is the beginning of a somewhat antimoral Victorian rags-to-riches tale. The story (no better authenticated than any of the rest of Fields' life history: he was a great raconteur, but possibly an untrustworthy autobiographer) is that at the tender age of eleven the infant William Claude, tired of slaving on his parents' greengrocery barrow, and of his father's harsh disciplines, hit the elder

Dukinfield over the head with a shovel and went off to seek his fortune.

There followed a period of casual work, vagrancy, petty larceny and consequent gaol sentences; even a defeatist spell when he went to live with his maternal grandmother. But Fields had already formed the resolve to be a juggler, and the best in the business—better even than the Byrne Brothers whose act had first inspired his ambition. He practised long and hard, and at fourteen he made his first modest professional appearances—establishing himself as a Tramp Juggler, because that way he could conveniently wear his street clothes on the stage and save himself the expense of a wardrobe. At 18 he was playing New York; at 19 he was earning \$125 a week (though it took him another fifteen years to

achieve his ambition of \$1,000 a week, and then he only made it by doubling the New York Palace and Alhambra). In 1900 he made the first of a series of European tours that continued up to the First World War. His own modestly self-confident billing was "The Greatest Juggler in the World," but everyone in vaudeville at the close of the nineteenth century admitted he was good. Sarah Bernhardt, who had a clause in her contract with the American impresario Martin Beck stating that she would not appear on the same bill as acrobats and jugglers, made an exception for Fields.

His first London booking was for four weeks at the Palace commencing February 18, 1901, and *The Stage* called his juggling "capital". Contemporary items in the theatre columns concerned Irving and Mrs. Campbell; Victorien Sardou had postponed his opening; Bernhardt had insured her life for £20,000 (annual premium, £1,560); Ada Rehan's mother had died; Marie Lloyd was on her way to Australia; Dan Leno presided at the Music Hall Benevolent Fund dinner; Puccini was considering an opera based on *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and George Marion was in London, scouting for Florenz Ziegfeld. (He apparently missed Fields this time round; though the comedian was to star in the *Follies* from 1915 to 1921.)

There is a peculiar significance, however, about the timing of this season, which was in some ways the crowning of Fields' early vaudeville career. He took part in a special matinée at the Palace Theatre, arranged so that people could see the American Biograph pictures of the funeral procession of the old Queen. Fields arrived, in fact, just as the Victorian age was passing; but he continued in many respects to cling to that particular part of his past. He loved (according to his friends) to reminisce about the Philadelphia of the Eighties. His favourite reading was Dickens and the Victorian romantic novelists. And in at least half a dozen of his films he recreated the vanished world of side-whiskers and crinolines. The picture of Fields that one's mind most easily conjures up is in the sort of shabby silk hat, tight pants, frock coat, stock and gaiters he wears as Micawber, his most improbable and in some respects most memorable role.

* * *

The vaudeville background is important: it was in this rigorous and demanding school that he learned his impeccable technique. He never dropped a ball or mistimed a gag. From the start he had a ruthless determination to outstrip everyone else in his chosen field. He has left a frightening description of his boyhood studies: "I still carry scars on my legs from those early attempts at juggling. I'd balance a stick on my toe, toss it in the air, and try to catch it again on my toe. Hour after hour the damned thing would bang against my shinbones. I'd work until tears were streaming down my face. But I kept on practising, and bleeding, until I perfected the trick. I don't believe that Mozart, Liszt, Paderewski, or Kreisler ever worked any harder than I did."

To hard work he added conscienceless larceny. In early days he stole much from Harry Tate's acts; in later life he would pinch gags, so long as they were good enough, from any other comedian. This was about the only compliment he was ever prepared to pay professional rivals. His jealousy of other performers was a byword. It became a Broadway legend how, in the *Follies*, Ed Wynn tried to upstage Fields and was knocked out cold by one smart, well-aimed blow with Fields' pool-cue—just as later Fields' feuds with the 18-month-old scene stealer Baby LeRoy were a Hollywood legend. Fields' ruses to ensure his billings and his salaries, his negotiations with impresarios and agents, are the *locus classicus* of the art of conning.

But he was an artist before he was a rogue. At the end of *The Old-Fashioned Way* Fields for no very appropriate reason performs the juggling act which he perfected on the stage forty years before. The years fall away: the old, sly, fat man becomes once again the lean intent youth in the vest, in the rare early picture reproduced in Donald Deschner's new *The Films of W. C. Fields* (Citadel Press, N.Y.). It is juggling such as one has rarely seen; and I think his cigar-box routine has never been imitated.

There is the same degree of polish about his sketches, which

had of course been refined—in the way of old-time vaudeville sketches—over long periods of years. The pool-table act, which appears from time to time in his films, and which he performed for the very last time in *Follow the Boys* (1944), was originally worked out around 1899. He was already working on the croquet act which appears in the film version of *Poppy* (1936) as early as 1908; and the golf sketch, which provided the material for his first sound short, and which also appears, fragmentarily, in *The Big Broadcast of 1938*, was created for the 1915 *Ziegfeld Follies*. In these sketches the comedy juggler had already become the comedian, characterising with a shrewd eye the idiosyncrasies of sportsmen in general and depicting the nightmare fatality that dogs this sport in particular. In each sketch he is victim to a mounting accumulation of misfortunes and catastrophes—a caddy with a large cap and squeaky boots, a piece of paper that wraps itself about his club, passers-by who pinch the balls; or (as the pool player) cues that are grotesquely warped, or slice through the table like a circular saw; or (as the croquet player) a mallet with an unfixed head and hoops inconveniently placed to floor the unwary walker.

"There is very little luck," Fields wrote, "almost everything must be thought out." He had worked out very precise notions of what made anything funny, and why one gag would hit and another miss. Mr. Deschner's monograph reprints an article of 1934, ghosted but self-evidently authentic, which sets out the empirical discoveries of an old vaudevillian:

"'Charley Bogle' spoken slowly and solemnly with a very long 'o' is a laugh. 'George Beebe' is not funny, but 'Doctor Beebe' is. The expression 'You big Swede' is not good for a laugh, but 'You big Polack' goes big. But if you say 'You big Polack' in a show you'll be visited by indignant delegations of protesting Poles. The Swedes don't seem to mind . . .

"You usually can't get a laugh out of damaging anything valuable. When you kick a silk hat, it must be dilapidated; when you wreck a car, bang it up a little before you bring it on the scene . . .

"It is funnier to bend things than to break them—bend the fenders on a car in a comedy wreck, don't tear them off . . . In legitimate drama, the hero breaks his sword and it is dramatic. In comedy, the sword bends, and stays bent . . .

"There is something funny about mice . . ."

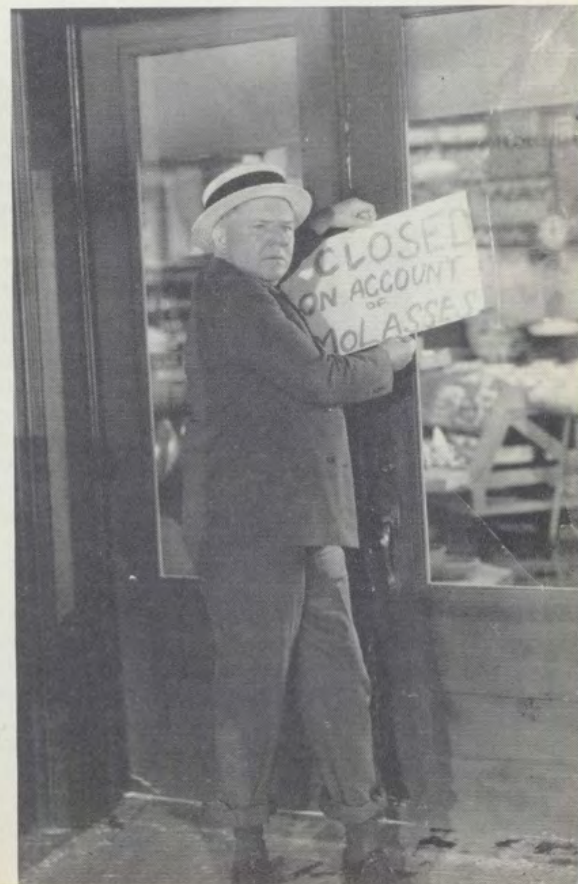
The same article has, incidentally, a curious little acknowledgment of the cruelty that lay at the base of much of Fields' comedy: "I like, in an audience, the fellow who roars continuously at the troubles of the character I am portraying on the stage, but he probably has a mean streak in him and, if I needed ten dollars, he'd be the last person I'd call upon. I'd go first to the old lady and old gentleman back in Row S who keep wondering what there is to laugh at."

* * *

The comedy juggler became a comedian, and the comedian became a character. Fields' real legacy is a character as round and rich and large as Sancho or Micawber or, even, Falstaff—but much more complex and puzzling than they are, because the personality spreads over from personage to personage, and finally from the creations to the creator. His situation could vary: single and emancipated the Fields character could be flamboyant and expansive; shackled by wives and families and mothers-in-law he could be submissive and cringing. Otherwise it did not really matter whether he was Egbert Sousé the bank dick, Harold Bissonnette the drugstore keeper, Eustace P. McGargle the medicine man, Micawber, Humpty Dumpty, Cuthbert J. Twillie, card-sharper, or the Great McGonigle, the American Crummles. The stout figure with its stiff, self-important gait, the thin, pale hair, the fiery nose, the incomparably cold, mean eyes, the lips forever drawn tight in unsleeping suspicion, betrayed the man.

He is for ever watchful lest the world at large may cheat him before he, the honest man you cannot cheat, has a chance to cheat it. Never give a sucker an even break. His constant fears

ABOVE: "TILLIE'S PUNCTURED ROMANCE". BELOW: TWO SCENES FROM "IT'S A GIFT".



—either of assault or detection—are reflected in the characteristic way his elbows jerk up when he is addressed unexpectedly, either in self-defence or to secure his hat. Always on the defensive, he manages never actually to be worsted, except of course by women, children and dogs, and sometimes croquet hoops and walking sticks, and on these occasions he gets his own back by tearing the ears with terrible hoarse animal cries of pain. One can but pity the hapless card-sharps who fall upon Fields. “Poker?” he muses, leering slightly. “Is that the game where one receives five cards; and if there’s two alike that’s pretty good; but if there’s three alike that’s much better? You must forgive the ignorance of a novice . . . Pinochle? That’s the top of something, isn’t it? The pinochle of a hill for instance?” (*Tillie and Gus*).

He is a coward of the meanest kind. Maybe he didn’t knock down Waterfront Nell; but he was the first to start in kicking her . . . with help, of course . . . a little grey woman (*My Little Chickadee*). He is incorrigibly boastful. His reminiscences of encounters with assegai-armed blacks (“Cut my way through them, a wall of human flesh”) bear comparison with Falstaff’s heroism at Gadshill. He is never at a loss: “Did no one ever attack you with a small knife, Mr. Sousé?” asks the bank president, sarcastically. “Why yes, matter of fact; little fellow I knew in a circus, a negro midget, name of Major Moe. Came at me with a knife barely two inches long. Hardly a knife; more of a razor.” (*The Bank Dick*.) Like Falstaff he is not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others. “You shouldn’t make fun of the gentleman’s nose,” reprimands a mother in *The Bank Dick*. “How would you like to have one like that full of nickels?”

* * *

Like any artistic creation, one can never retrace the exact processes by which this unique character was built. Privately, the youthful Fields, conditioned by his unconventional and irregular mode of life, must himself already have been fairly colourful. In early vaudeville days he used comic patter to accompany his Tramp Juggler act. Then, with characteristic unpredictability, around the turn of the century he dropped talk entirely—perhaps when he had foreign tours in view. He yearned for speaking parts, however—just as years later when he *had* speaking parts he always wanted to introduce his old vaudeville acts into any show or film in which he appeared. (Cukor managed somehow to talk him out of doing the pool number in *Copperfield*.) An abortive opening in the musical *Watch Your Step* (1914), from which Fields was dropped after the first night, was followed by the *Follies* period in which the comedian was able to develop both the sketches and the character.

The crucial point, however, in the creation of the ultimate and archetypal Fields was, I suspect, his encounter with Eustace P. McGargle. *Poppy*, which opened at the New Apollo Theatre, New York on September 3, 1923, appears to have been a perfectly commonplace, not to say banal musical, written by Dorothy Donnelly, with music by Stephen Jones and Arthur Samuels, produced by Philip Goodman. But Fields at once saw something more than ordinary in the character of Professor McGargle, the medicine man, something that seemed to focus and crystallise the character that he had been bit by bit putting together for himself over the past forty years. Fields and McGargle came together and set to recreating each in the other’s image. Fields seems to have ‘improved’ Miss Donnelly’s play almost out of recognition; and the revised programme nine months after the original production shows the introduction of character names like Amos Sniffen and the presence in the cast of William Blanche, Fields’ renowned dwarf manservant, as “Shorty, a Peanut Vendor”.

On stage and screen and off, Fields was to fill out and play McGargle, in one thin disguise or another, for the next twenty-three years. McGargle is a grandiloquent fake who milks the crowd at country fairs and sets up a fraudulent scheme to make his adopted daughter heiress to a large fortune, only to find that she is in reality the true heiress. It was not only the comic elements of McGargle that appealed to Fields, but also the Victorian novelette element about the

relationship of father and daughter: the reprehensible parent slipping off alone into the night, figuratively speaking, so as not to stand in the way of his daughter’s betterment. This relationship recurs several times in his films (for instance in the odd, Germanic *Her Majesty Love*, directed by Dieterle in 1931). It seems as if Fields, who never had a daughter, had peculiarly tender notions about the relationship. The idea gives a dual ambiguity to his declaration, “Sure I like children. Girl children. Round about 18, 19.”

Twice Fields filmed *Poppy*. The first time was in 1925 as a silent film, *Sally of the Sawdust*, directed, improbably, by D. W. Griffith; the second was in 1936, with Edward Sutherland as director. By now McGargle—selling the talking dog; haranguing the crowds as medicine man, shell-game specialist or revivalist lecturer; playing croquet; plotting a million-dollar fraud; wooing the fake Countess De Puizzi (“Dee Pussy” he cheerfully mispronounces it)—is majestic; and Fields, so desperately ill during the shooting that, sober, he could not keep on his feet, is at the relaxed peak of his comic form. Two years earlier *The Old-Fashioned Way*, which also enshrines some of Fields’ most colourful material, including his flirtation with the stage-struck Jan Duggan and the triumphant moment when, left alone with Baby LeRoy, he boots the child through the door, is a fairly shameless crib from *Poppy*. The screenplay, significantly, is by Charles Bogle (alias Fields). The great man had no qualms even about stealing his own material, along with everyone else’s.

* * *

With typical Quixotry, Fields, at the age of fifty, left the security of Broadway to seek his fortune anew, in Hollywood. And it was during his fifteen years in films that the character passed into the realms of legend and immortality. “There is very little luck.” The character must have been built up quite consciously and deliberately, developed freely thanks to Fields’ ability to impose himself forcibly upon his films and his directors. (Even his director friends, like Le Baron, La Cava and Sutherland, were frequently exasperated by his perverse and overbearing ways.) Fields, notoriously (cf. the \$25,000 that Universal handed over for the farrago that became *Never Give a Sucker*) wrote his own stories, under names like Bogle or Mahatma Kane Jeeves. He largely improvised his own dialogue, except when it was written by gagmen he admired, like Dickens or Lewis Carroll.

For the rest, as he declared in a riposte to Eddie Cline’s charges of Bacchic incompetence: “I ad-lib most of my dialogue. If I did remember my lines, it would be too bad for me.” And for us, because his literary gift, if eccentric, was considerable. He loved words, in a Dickensian way; and like Dickens he adored peculiar names like Figley E. Whitesides, Sneed Hearn, Otis Guelpe, Prettiwillie. The original Charles Bogle was a bootlegger known to Fields; Chester Snavely was an undertaker in Philadelphia; and Postlethwaite and Smunn were a firm of lawyers. He even liked his own boyhood nickname of Whitey Dukinfield. In *Poppy* he stops the action to linger longingly over repetitions of ‘Beelzebub’, caressing every syllable. In *Tillie and Gus* he plays about with pronunciations and malapropisms: “‘The last Will and Testament’,” he reads out, “‘includes you among the beanfisheries, Yours truly, Phineas Pratt, Executor’ . . . so now the poor fellow is in a moratorium.” He loved to throw about words like ‘effulgency’ and ‘redundancy’, or give new vigour to commonplace words like lad and fellow and Mr. and Sir. His imagery was vivid. “She’s all dressed up,” he says of Jan Duggan, “like a well-kept grave.” (*The Old-Fashioned Way*.)

His humour had a startling surrealist touch about it. The plot of *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break* is famous: Fields, on his way to Mexico to sell wooden nutmegs to the Russian colony there, jumps out of a plane to retrieve a bottle of whisky and lands on a mountain-top where live Mrs. Hemoglobin, a man-eater, and her daughter Ouliotta. Less well-known is the much earlier short *The Pharmacist* (1933), made for Sennett, in which Fields’ greedy little daughter suddenly eats the canary. Seeing her splutter a little over the feathers, her father snarls “Serves you right,” then hastily looks to the safety of the parrot.

The great mystery of Fields, however, is the exact relationship of art and life in his work, of Fields to his creations. The evidence of people who knew him is that he was very much the same off stage and on; and he certainly took every step to encourage the idea that the private Mr. Fields was mean, mendacious, the con-man supreme. The only thing he might have claimed in his favour was that he was not a drunk; only an Olympian drinker.

He was clearly a deeply disturbed man psychologically, full of obsessions and suspicions and fears and prejudices which appear to have given him very little peace during the greater part of his life. The drinking that was eventually so cruelly to decay his fine constitution, alert mind and juggler's coordination, appears to have been the only more or less effective sedative available to him. What is extraordinary is the manner in which he was able to transmute his present mental torments and bitter memories into rapturous comedy. His domestic experiences, for instance, as son, husband, father, were miserable; hence those hilariously awful families in *The Bank Dick*, *It's a Gift* and the rest. The vile child in the former film who hurls a rock at his head ("You fool," says the wife, "the child's only playing with you." "Well I don't understand her funnin'.") is called Elsie Mae Adele, after Fields' two sisters. The detestable malicious layabout brother-in-law in *The Man on the Flying Trapeze* is called Claude after the comedian's son. Again, Fields was tormented by insomnia for many years until his death. He therefore gives us the memorable scene at the start of *It's a Gift*, where Harold Bissonnette tries unsuccessfully to sleep on the balcony of his apartment (having fled from the mercilessly illogical nagging of his wife) against the competition of neighbours, neighbours' babies, milkmen, vegetable men, garbage men and a pushing insurance agent looking for someone else.

He had a terror of burglars, which used to send him wandering his house at nights, carrying on burglar-frightening conversations with himself; and he was obsessed that the servants stole his booze. The funniest scene in *The Man on the Flying Trapeze* is a piece of nonsense where Fields and his wife are awakened by burglars, high on his apple-jack and singing lustily in the cellar. The burglars are joined by a policeman who joins in the apple-jack and "The Banks of the Wabash". Fields' family—bullying wife, nagging mother-in-law and Claude—gather in the bedroom and force him to go down and deal with the intruders. He too joins in the apple-jack song and accompanies his new friends to the police

station. There, justice being what it is, he is jailed for possessing illegal apple-jack while the burglars are released. For Fields inherited from his early years a mistrust of policemen, magistrates, dogs and practically anyone in authority. To this list, in more prosperous years, he added bankers, investment brokers, doctors and friends; and these anathemas fill his films.

To what extent this metamorphosis of the horrors of existence into high comedy provided Fields with a sort of catharsis, and to what extent he saw it as an elaborate system of private revenge, is hard to determine. Whichever the case, it is certainly one of the reasons we love him. As Arthur Knight writes, in an introduction to *The Films of W. C. Fields*: "The wonderful thing was that no sooner did Fields begin to work out his own aggressions on film than audiences everywhere recognised that in fact these were their aggressions too. They were hen-pecked. They too were being cheated. The cards were stacked against them too. They loved the unlovable Fields emphatically because they understood that in his funny, twisted, implacable way, he was eternally fighting the same enemies as they were." It is at least one explanation for the strange phenomenon that we should be so drawn to this mean, repellent, ugly old man, just as we are to the reprobate old Falstaff. Of course we always love a nonconformist, and no one was ever more magnificently anti-social than Fields. There is his wit, too: he is a great raconteur and entertainer. I suspect, also, subtler reasons. We glimpse, or imagine we glimpse, chinks in the armour.

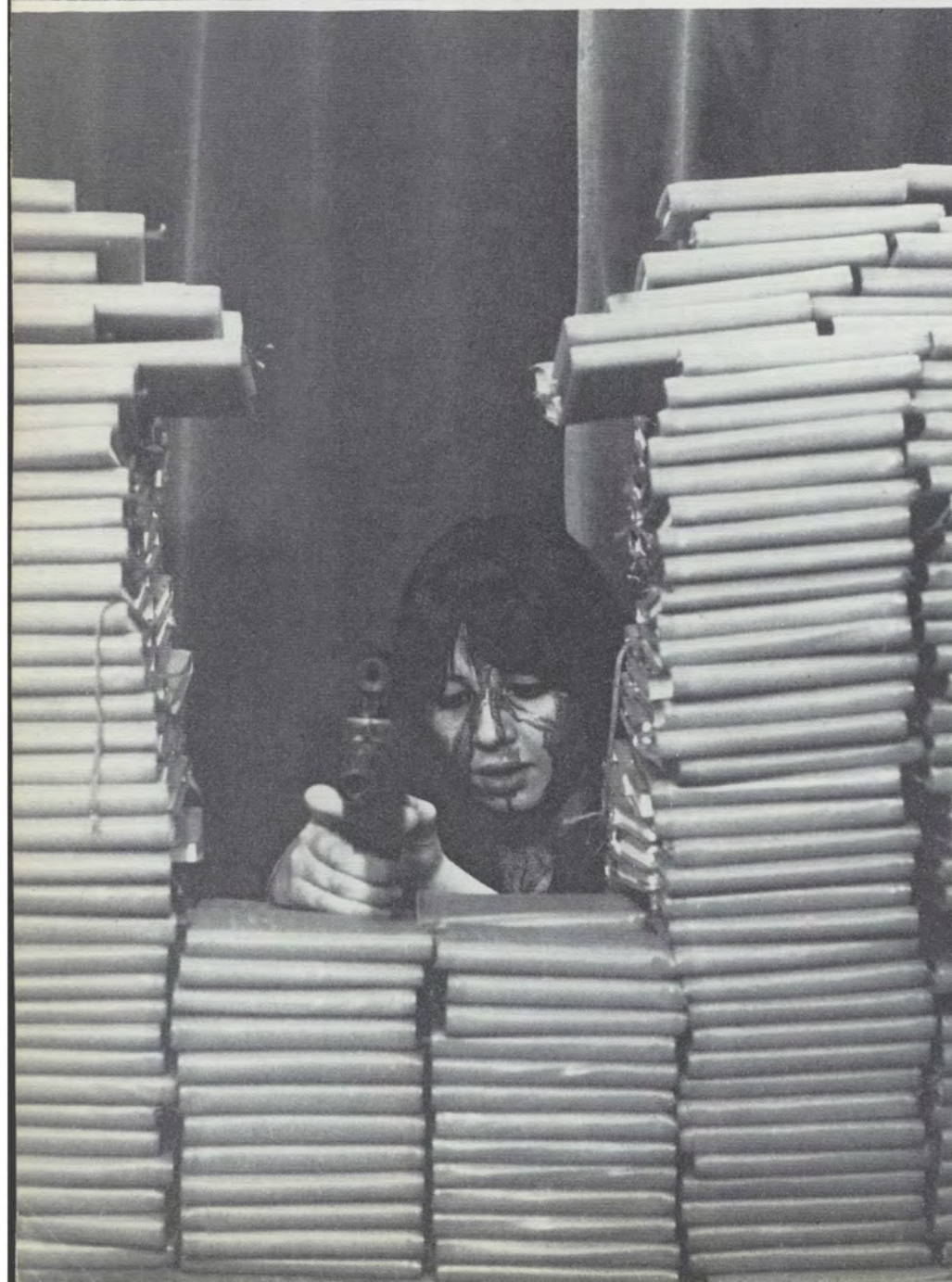
Fields himself would have fought to the death to put down the notion that the public personality—hardly distinguishable eventually between off-screen and on-screen presences—protected a rather nice, over-sensitive man. But this (on the evidence available to us) was possibly Bill Fields' greatest fraud. Against the expressed misanthropy and the weirdly sadistical practical jokes he was inclined to perpetrate on friends and enemies alike, we have to set the devotion of his known friends and his generosity, sometimes fanatical, towards them, his vigorous war on racialism. Against his declared hatred of children must be set his insistence on writing Baby LeRoy into scripts after the studio had lost interest in the child. Shades of the more tender, human side of Fields from time to time break through despite himself. He never ends his films teetering off on solitary, endless roads, but is still not without his gifts of pathos. He was, all in all, a tricky fellow. As he said himself, "Any man who hates small dogs and children can't be *all* bad."

LEFT: "MILLION DOLLAR LEGS". RIGHT: AS MICAWBER IN "DAVID COPPERFIELD".

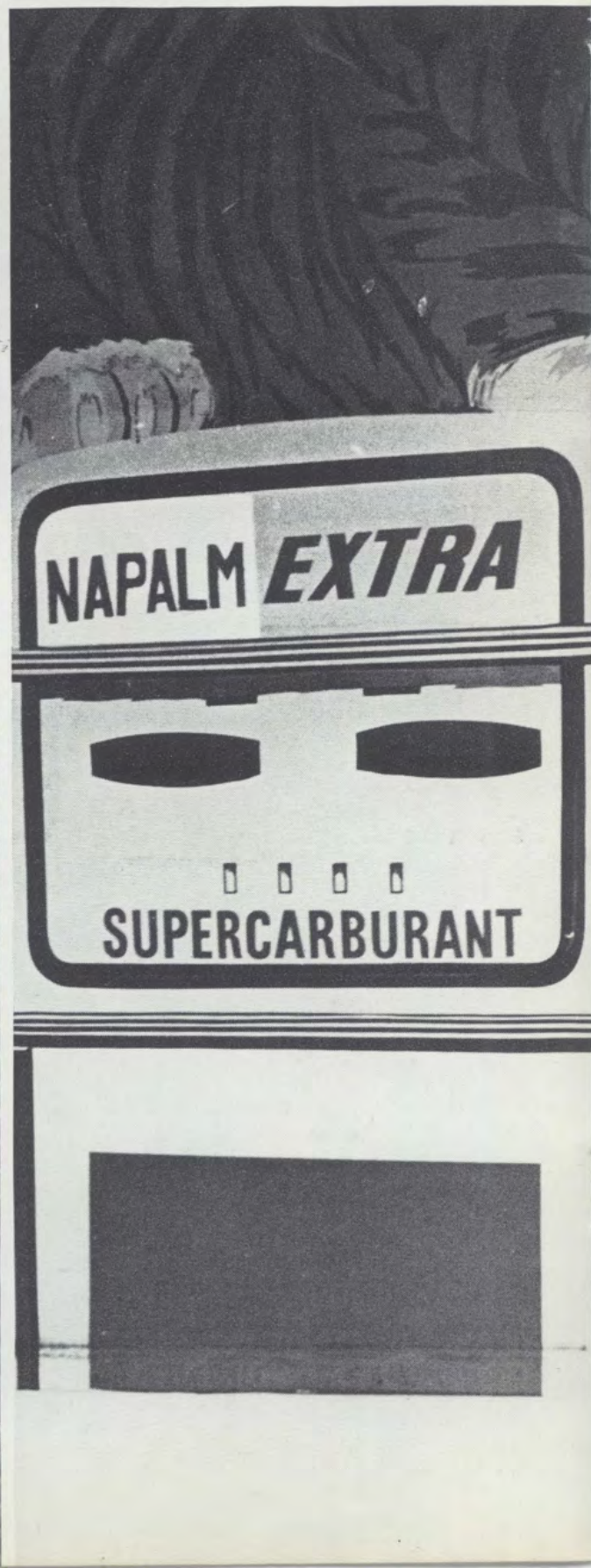




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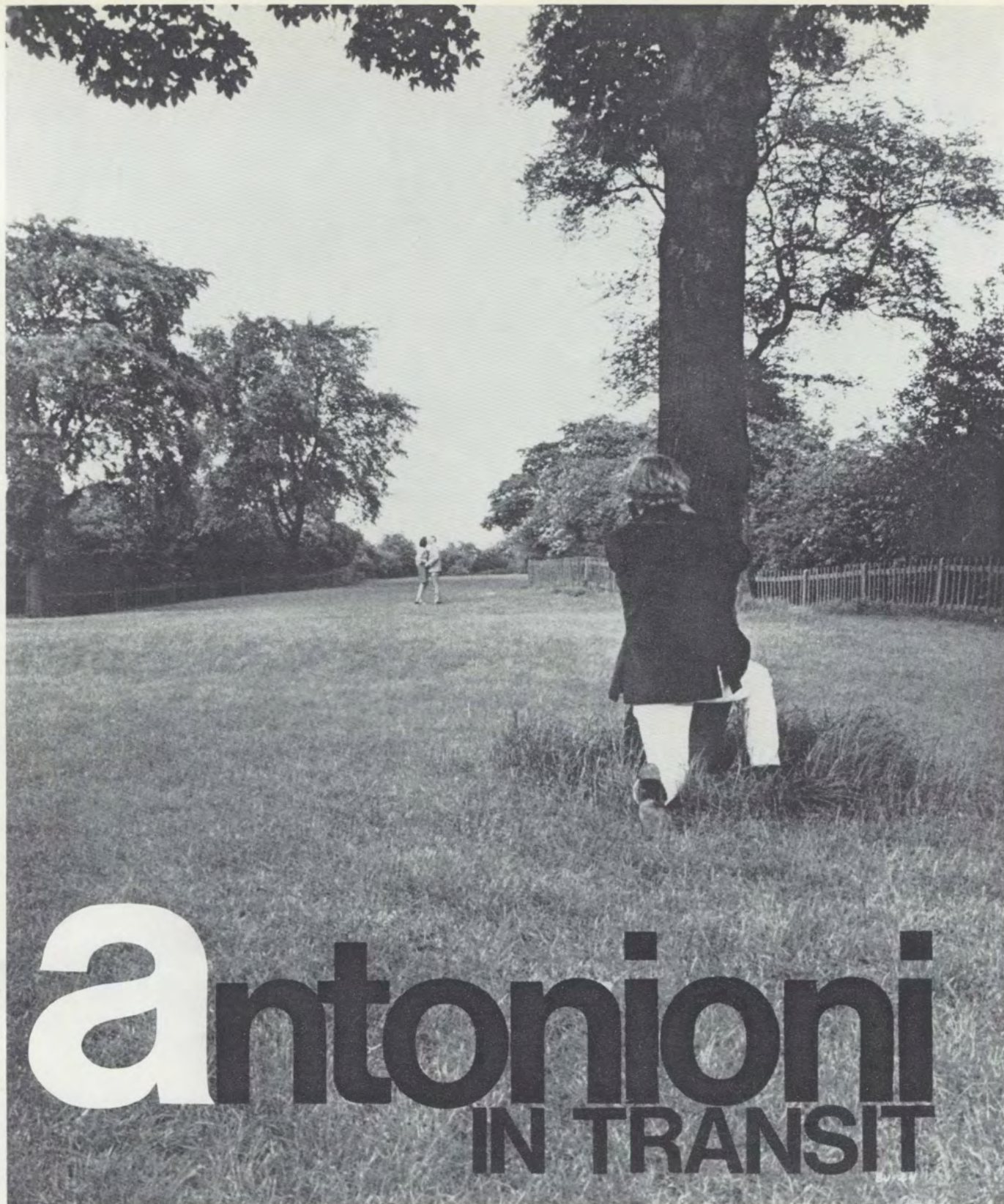
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CHINOISE DE J-LG



SS



"BLOW-UP".

Marsha Kinder

AFTER RED DESERT many people claimed that Antonioni had reached a dead end, that he was obsessed with the same theme in all his films and probably would never be able to break from its confined path. Then came *Blow-Up*, which seems to be a radical departure both in theme and technique. Yet upon closer examination, I think we can find that although *Blow-Up* may move in a new direction, the road it follows definitely leads from the earlier films. Perhaps the three most obvious differences are these. Antonioni no longer focuses on the inner life of his characters or on emotional relationships, but is primarily concerned with contemporary art. His central

character is no longer Monica Vitti playing a sensitive, suffering female, but an energetic David Hemmings playing a successful photographer in tune with the modern scene. The pace is no longer exceedingly slow with long lingering shots—but rapid, almost breathless.

The four films before *Blow-Up* (*L'Avventura*, 1959; *La Notte*, 1960; *L'Eclisse*, 1962; *Deserto Rosso*, 1964) do develop a single dominant theme—a sense of loss in the realm of emotions and personal relationships. Antonioni was concerned with the emergence of a new kind of personal relationship, for which most people are unprepared emotionally.

because their education, upbringing and culture have aroused a set of expectations which are difficult to reject yet no longer fulfilled in a modern world dominated by business and science. I do not mean to suggest that Antonioni's attitude is simply a nostalgic longing for the 'good old days'; it's more complex than that. He does not imply that the new world is totally negative, but recognises it has many important values—the power necessary for man to master his environment; an efficiency which may improve his lot by wiping out hunger, poverty and physical pain; and the creation of a pure, abstract beauty. Yet despite these values, he also suggests that this world poses a real threat because it implies the loss of other values—of long-term personal relationships, of the uniqueness of the individual. Thus, he presents us with a clash between two incompatible value systems, which is essentially a tragic view.

* * *

Since Antonioni is primarily concerned with the influence of external conditions on the interior life of his characters, he had to use the right kind of character who could reveal these effects. His solution was to focus on a woman as the central character, and her relations with a less sensitive man. In an interview, he once said: "I think that reality can be filtered better through women's psychologies. They are more instinctive, more sincere." This sounds very much like Henry James' explanation of why he usually chose a woman for his centre of consciousness, and James was also concerned with an interior view. But perhaps a more important reason is that the woman is the one for whom the older values are most important; a stable love for husband and children is usually the centre of a woman's life. She is the one for whom the changes are most threatening, for she must find a completely new role in the new world. Moreover, the feminine principle is most closely identified with the values of the past that are being lost—sensitivity to human feeling, intuition, and instinctiveness. Once Antonioni shifted his focus of attention away from the interior life of his characters, he was no longer restricted to a female central character.

I do not mean to imply that the four films do not show any development: they definitely treat this main theme in different ways. For one thing, there is a growing recognition of and emphasis on the values of the new world: they are almost absent from *L'Avventura*, clearly present in *La Notte* and *L'Eclisse*, and receive considerable attention in *Red Desert*. Also, there are important differences in the central characters played by Monica Vitti. Claudia in *L'Avventura* begins naively with a belief in the old values, but painfully gains an understanding of the loss. Yet at the end she tries to maintain as much human contact as possible and settles for the limited relationship with Sandro in an attempt to compensate for the loss. In contrast, Valentina in *La Notte* knows about the loss from the beginning and is unwilling to settle for the limited relationship. Instead she remains emotionally detached yet longing for the impossible. Like Valentina, Vittoria in *L'Eclisse* also knows about the loss from the beginning, yet like Claudia she is willing to accept a limited relationship but without fooling herself that it is compensating for the loss. Although this gives her superior understanding and makes her the most stable and realistic of all the central characters, she does not have a capacity for feeling that is superior to Piero's as Claudia's was superior to Sandro's.

Giuliana of *Red Desert* also has the awareness of the loss from the beginning, but without the willingness to accept the limited relationship. In her case, the awareness leads to selfish narcissism and a psychological breakdown. She is struggling, not for awareness like Claudia, but for the ability to accept the new world—for some kind of reconciliation, which she finally achieves. Yet all of these characters would ideally like

to have the same thing: either the old type of relationship, which is no longer possible, or complete emotional independence, which would enable them to live in the modern world without pain. That is what Vittoria means when she tells Piero, "I wish I didn't love you . . . or that I loved you more." It also explains Giuliana's contradictory fantasies of having either everyone who ever loved her to be around her like a wall, or the complete emotional freedom expressed in her story of the young girl alone on the island who is caressed by the sand, sea and rocks. Anna and Valentina actually strive for such independence.

Antonioni does not offer an easy answer to the problem of the conflict between the two value systems. He seems to accept the new world as inevitable although it means a sacrifice of important values from the past. The only hope seems to be understanding and a sympathetic acceptance of whatever human contact is possible. Understanding alone won't suffice—as Anna, Valentina and Giuliana demonstrate. Nor will an unthinking acceptance—as in the case of Sandro, Giovanni, Piero and Giuliana's husband. The most positive characters must achieve both, as Claudia and Vittoria ultimately do.

* * *

Although these four films focus on how changes in the modern world affect human relationships, they also imply that a similar change is taking place in art. For example, both central male characters in *L'Avventura* and *La Notte*—Sandro and Giovanni—are artists who sold out; and in both cases the loss in artistic power is linked to their failure in a love relationship. The change is also reflected in the examples of modern art that appear in the films—especially architecture. In *La Notte*, *L'Eclisse* and *Red Desert* there are many shots of huge modern buildings, obviously not built on human scale, which deflate the importance of the individual human being while celebrating the power of man's accomplishment. These buildings undeniably have beauty, yet of a particular kind—one that is clean, pure and abstract. For example, the huge radar towers in *Red Desert* are the products of science and technology, yet their design is lovely, delicate and graceful. They almost look like huge geometric webs; but they make the men who are climbing them seem like little spiders, which helps to explain why they are so frightening to Giuliana. The most important point that Antonioni seems to stress is that individuals appear out of place in these buildings or imprisoned by their precise geometric patterns.

I think we can best examine the change in art and its relationship to the theme of emotional loss by focusing on *L'Avventura*. Sandro is an architect who gave up design in order to specialise in making financial estimates. His excuse for selling out is that buildings are no longer built for centuries, but are replaceable like people. The accuracy of this statement is supported by many shots in the film. For example, the opening scene shows modern apartment buildings encroaching on the villa of Anna's father; the villa is as outmoded as his conception of marriage. Later when Sandro and Claudia visit the deserted village, he calls the architecture 'madness'. The entire village has outlived its usefulness and is now like a skeleton or graveyard. It presumably was built for workmen on a job, but when the work was over the village no longer had any use. In the modern world, men go where the work is; they no longer have any roots. Other examples are the buildings being transformed from a means of personal expression or seclusion to a public institution. For example, the police headquarters at Milazzo was once a beautiful villa, a monument of art, a means of personal expression for the builder, who (someone observes) is probably turning over in his grave. Similarly, someone humorously suggests that Montaldo's villa be turned into an insane asylum.



VIEW FROM A WINDOW IN "L'ECLISSE".

The signs of change in art are not limited to architecture. The abstract, dehumanised quality comes out in the scene where Claudia visits the art gallery, while Anna and Sandro are making love. She is more intrigued and delighted by the reactions of the people than by the paintings, which have no relation to human beings. The lack of permanence is also suggested in the scene where they discover the ancient vase on the island. It has lasted for centuries, but as soon as someone from the modern world touches it, it is destroyed. There is also a suggestion that art has become a source of exploitation, a means to an end rather than an end in itself. For example, Goffredo uses his paintings merely to express his sexual desire and as a means of gratifying that desire by seducing his models. In their momentary passion he and Giulia knock over his easel and carelessly destroy the 'art'. Similarly, Gloria (the prostitute who takes Claudia's and Anna's place with Sandro) claims that she is a writer who communicates with the spirits of

Tolstoi and Shakespeare. She reduces art to a cheap publicity trick and exploits it just as she exploits sex: she is a cheap substitute both for art and love. Thus, in this film Antonioni implies that art has undergone three main changes: it is no longer permanent, it is no longer related to human subjects or to the individual, and it has become a source of economic exploitation.

* * *

The implications of these changes are developed much further in *Blow-Up*. In this film contemporary art not only lacks permanence, but actually values the moment. This helps to explain why the central character is a photographer rather than an architect, for photography is concerned with capturing the moment. Moreover, contemporary art places a value on something in a particular context. One of the basic justifications of pop art, for example, is that it takes familiar objects and puts them into a new context that gives them a new value. In other words, the value lies not in the object itself, but in its relationship with a specific context. This notion is mocked in the scene where Thomas goes to hear the Yardbirds and gets away with part of the smashed guitar. The fragment, which was so highly valued in that particular situation, is merely a worthless piece of junk once he gets outside into a new context. The importance of context is also implied in his selection of the propeller at the antique shop. It is the one item among all those antiques that is linked with the contemporary world—with technology, with dynamic motion. Once he has it at home in a different context, his excitement is considerably abated.

Secondly, contemporary art not only is abstract and detached from human involvement, but it actually becomes a substitute for such involvements. This is brought out in the comic scene when shooting his model with his camera becomes a substitute for sexual intercourse. Although Thomas claims he would prefer to shoot pictures of real people rather than beautiful models, he shows no greater understanding of the human significance of these photographs. In fact, he uses exactly the same language to describe them that he uses for his fashion photos. When one of these photos leads to the discovery of a murder, he is concerned with it only as it relates to his art—he never thinks of calling the police, or of finding out the motive, or helping to capture the murderers. In fact, he finds that the larger he blows up the pictures and the more distorted and ambiguous they become, the greater variety of interpretation they allow, and this leads him to the discovery of the murder. Thus, interpreting ambiguous art is like solving a mystery, which is almost precisely what his friend Bill had said about his own abstract painting. It is no accident that Patricia (Sarah Miles) points to the similarity between Bill's painting and Thomas's blow-up of the body. This leads to a valuing of ambiguity for its own sake.

Thirdly, the economic exploitation of art is practised not only by the amateur (like Goffredo) or the complete phoney (like Gloria), but by the most competent artists, which implies it has become an accepted part of contemporary art. The commercial photographer and the rock and roll star who are really 'good' are expected to succeed—to make money, to be well received. The stereotype of the artist is no longer an undiscovered genius starving in the garret. Artistic talent and success have become compatible and almost synonymous.

The expanded treatment of these changes leads to two other important implications about contemporary art. It implies that the creative process depends on accident and spontaneity and is really not carefully controlled. For example, Bill suggests that he is not sure of what he is doing while he is painting, that the creative process is marked by confusion; the control comes in after the painting is done and is manifested in the act of interpretation—of finding one little area that

works. Similarly, Thomas takes many shots very rapidly and then goes through the careful process of selecting the one he will use. It is the act of interpreting the pictures taken in the park that arouses all the excitement. The value of spontaneity and accident is also apparent in the scene where the Yardbirds are performing before a passive audience, which suddenly is transformed into a screaming mob when one of the singers 'spontaneously' smashes his guitar. Whether the whole thing was planned and merely appeared spontaneous, is ambiguous; but in either case, spontaneity is clearly valued.

Another characteristic of contemporary art is the confusion between the artist (the creator) and his instrument of creation. This is another example of ambiguity and is linked to the minimising of control that the artist has during the act of creation. This idea is suggested in the mob's reaction to the guitar, and also in the relationship between Thomas and his camera. At one point he contradicts himself by saying he 'saw' the murder, when what he really means is that his camera saw it.

I do not mean to imply that *Blow-Up* is solely about art, but rather that it is the main focus. As in the earlier films, there is a very strong relationship between art and life—and it is not at all clear which imitates which. For example, the valuing of the moment is also suggested by Thomas's extremely short interest span in any subject, by the concern with fashionable clothes, by the conspicuous absence of any long-term relationships, and by the owner of the antique shop who is tired of old things. The detachment is reflected at the marijuana party, where everyone turns on and tunes out. It also is implied in the love triangle between Bill, Patricia and Thomas, which significantly never really develops. She wants to leave Bill and apparently is attracted to Thomas. When she comes to ask him for help, she realises it is useless. There is a simultaneous conversation going on about her situation and the murder he has discovered. If he didn't bother to find out who was killed and why and by whom, then how can she possibly expect him to help her?

Ambiguity is perhaps the most obvious quality in the film. We find it in the dress of the people on the street, which makes it very difficult to tell the boys from the girls. We see it in Sarah Miles' dress, which purposely makes it ambiguous as to whether she is wearing anything underneath. We see it in the antique shop where the man's face is hidden behind the screen. Or in the scene where Thomas picks Jane (Vanessa Redgrave) out of a crowd. Or in the behaviour of the teenagers, which is a baffling combination of extreme shyness and boldness. And perhaps most obviously, in the neon sign over the park, which Antonioni had constructed to be intentionally ambiguous and which is only momentarily in focus. Thus, as in his earlier films, Antonioni is suggesting that there is a new style of behaviour which is in marked contrast to a more traditional body of values, but his emphasis is on the changes in art rather than in human relationships.

* * *

The important question we should raise is how this shift in focus leads to differences in technique, for any good director uses the formal elements of his film to express the meaning. The answer is obvious with respect to colour; it is no longer used to reflect subjective views of reality and emotional attitudes as it was in *Red Desert*. But I think we can learn more about the changes in *Blow-Up* by focusing on this question with reference to pace and structure. In *Blow-Up* there is a radical change in pace as compared with the earlier films. The only similarity is that it has an important expressive function in both. The pace in the earlier films is generally very slow, and this has the significant function of taking the emphasis away from the action and focusing it instead on the mood or inner feelings of the characters. There are, for example, the long, lingering shots in *La Notte* of Lidia

(Jeanne Moreau) wandering aimlessly at the party or through the streets. Nothing particular happens, but that is precisely the point; it is the slowness of pace that reveals her emotional state. These characters are all looking for something that is missing, but they are not sure what it is or where to find it. The visual images are charged with emotional effects that take time to work on the viewer.

The most effective use of pacing in the four films occurs in *L'Eclisse*, where it is absolutely essential to the film's meaning. The centre of interest is the relationship between Vittoria and Piero, who represent two worlds that move at entirely different speeds; and this difference in pace helps to define each world and its values. Vittoria is a translator and belongs to the world of the humanities; her world moves very slowly, for it is concerned with preserving the values of the past. When she is alone, she moves slowly and follows her interest and curiosity wherever they may lead her without worrying about the time. In contrast, Piero works at the Stock Exchange and belongs to the world of business and finance

VALERIO BARTOLESCHI, GIULIANA'S SON IN "THE RED DESERT".





PARTY SCENE IN "LA NOTTE": MONICA VITTI AS VALENTINA.

that moves at a frantic pace and focuses on the future. He never stands still for a moment and is always worried about wasting his time, for in this world time is money. The contrast in pace definitely controls their relationship. While he is eager to begin the affair, she is hesitant because she is aware of the inevitable result. Their relationship is like an eclipse, which implies two things. First, an eclipse suggests a loss, or a dimming of power; and their relationship is certainly limited. Secondly, an eclipse also implies a temporary period when the paths of two heavenly bodies are in conjunction. This is exactly what human relationships have become—brief moments of togetherness between longer periods of emotional isolation, the temporary conjunction of two human bodies moving in different orbits at different speeds. The difference in pace is an indication that their relationship cannot last.

Antonioni arranges the incidents in the film to heighten the contrast in pace. The two rapidly paced scenes in the stock market are preceded and followed by some of the slowest scenes in the film. Within the first scene at the stock market, there is a moment of silence that also works by the principle of contrast. The silence is a sign of respect for a dead colleague, a human relationship; yet he is only granted a minute. Moreover, this minute accentuates the excitement of the market's normal activity, just as the brief affair between Piero and Vittoria heightens the awareness of their normal state of isolation.

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The rapid pace of *Blow-Up* is well suited to a character who is constantly on the move and concerned with capturing the moment. The pace of the film helps to express Thomas's conception of art and experience. He constantly moves from one context to another and is incapable of focusing his attention on a subject for very long, and this is partially expressed by the rapid succession of visual images. Not one single episode in the film is sustained; there are always interruptions. For example, in the scene between Jane and Thomas at his studio, their attention constantly shifts from their respective goals of getting back the film and finding out why she wants it, and is attracted by such things as the telephone, the music, smoking a cigarette, her posture. Finally, when they are about to make love—which represents a

distraction for Jane, who carelessly throws aside the film that she was so desperately seeking—they are interrupted by the delivery boy bringing the propeller. Another example is the brilliant scene where Thomas is developing the photos taken in the park and reaching various interpretations, which are expressed almost entirely in visual terms. This is the point where Thomas is most engaged by any activity, yet it is also interrupted by a 'phone call and then by the hilarious encounter with the two teenagers. Thus, in this film as in *L'Eclisse*, the pace is essential to the meaning.

If we turn to the structure of *Blow-Up*, we find that it shares similarities with that of the earlier films, but they are used for different functions. The basic structure of all five films is a cyclical pattern comprised of episodes which contain a certain amount of repetition and leave a number of questions unanswered. One way of achieving the cyclical quality is by having every picture begin and end in the morning. In the earlier films the repetitious cycle implies the interchangeability of persons. For example, Claudia replaces the missing Anna in *L'Avventura*. We are never told why she left, but we discover the answer by focusing on Claudia. At the end of the film, Claudia is in Anna's position—she is aware of the limited nature of her relationship with Sandro and of his weakness, but instead of withdrawing like Anna she accepts it. Similarly, in *L'Eclisse* we don't have to see the ending of Vittoria's affair with Piero because we have already seen the break with Riccardo, and presumably it will be just the same. The absence of a conventional dramatic structure also helps to suggest that in these films action is not the main focus and that the central meaning must be found elsewhere.

This is not at all the case in *Blow-Up*. Here, the absence of a conventional dramatic plot and the unanswered questions help to reveal Thomas's fragmented view of experience, which is comprised of separate moments. No episode reaches a climax or resolution; no human relationship builds or develops. This structure also implies that Thomas doesn't really care about finding the answers. In *L'Avventura* Claudia at first thought she cared about what happened to Anna, then only pretended to care, and finally had to admit she really didn't and to accept what that implied. But in *Blow-Up* there is no pretence: motives, causes, people simply don't matter to

Thomas. This lack of a conventional plot also helps to express Thomas's conception of art. If an artist assumes that accident and spontaneity play an important role in art and if he values ambiguity, then he is unlikely to have a tightly controlled plot with a resolution that neatly ties together all the loose ends; for such a structure implies that the artist has carefully planned out everything in advance. He avoids the conventional mystery plot.

Yet there is an irony in the structure of *Blow-Up*. Although on first view it seems to be episodic and rather random in order, a closer examination reveals that it does have a rather artificial order. Many of the encounters that Thomas has in the first half of the film (before he meets Jane) are repeated in reverse order in the second half, which makes a neat circular pattern after all. For example, it begins and ends in a morning when Thomas encounters the mime troupe. His next encounter is with the model whom he photographs, and whom he meets again at the party before going to look for the body the next morning. Next, he shoots the grotesque models, whom he refers to as 'birds' and whom he sneaks out on and leaves waiting with their eyes closed; which is paralleled by the scene right before the party where he hears the Yardbirds and their glassy-eyed audience and manages to sneak out with the piece of guitar. After leaving the models, he goes next door to see Bill and his girl friend, a visit which he repeats before the scene with the Yardbirds. Returning from his first visit, he runs into the two teenage girls, who show up later while he is developing the photos before he makes his second visit to Bill. The two central episodes are his two major encounters with Jane—the first meeting in the park is framed by two visits to the antique shop, and the second encounter in his studio is preceded by his stop in the restaurant and terminated by the arrival of the propeller from the antique shop, which links it to the first meeting. The structure, then, is not haphazard, which implies a distance between Thomas's and Antonioni's view of art. I think this distinction can be clarified by a closer examination of the mime troupe, which frames the film.

The art of the mime troupe in the final scene suggests an important contrast with the other examples of art in the film. For one thing, it is not temporary; pantomime is a traditional art form linked to the past, and the imaginary tennis game is a

sustained creation that does build. Secondly, it is an art which requires engagement—not only from the performers, but also from the audience looking on who contribute to the illusion. It also requires the involvement of the camera, which follows the path of the imaginary ball; and finally succeeds in winning the active participation of Thomas, who has been detached throughout the film. He actually retrieves the imaginary ball for them, and has to put down his camera to do it. This act recalls the first interaction between Thomas and the troupe in the opening scene when he contributes money to their cause. Thirdly, the artists in this instance are in control of what they are creating: the illusion of the spontaneous or accidental (that is, when the ball goes over the fence) is obviously controlled; there is no instrument (like a guitar or camera) other than the creators themselves; the ambiguity between illusion and reality is carefully controlled and is based upon a wilful act of imagination that is totally missing from Thomas's conception of art. This is the kind of art that is being replaced in the contemporary world, and its position at the end of the film helps to stress its significance.

I am suggesting, then, that Antonioni is critical of the style he employs in *Blow-Up*. It is not that the style is inherently 'bad', but that it can be used to imply a conception of experience that threatens to destroy values of the past. Yet he demonstrates that he can use it as effectively as his contemporaries. In this film he seems to allude to the styles of others, which was not characteristic of his earlier films—the fast pace of *Lester*, the Hitchcock-like treatment of the murder in the park, the mime troupe which seems to belong in a Fellini film, and even the allusiveness which is so characteristic of Godard. Yet he uses the allusions quite differently by making the borrowed elements peculiarly his own, by making them essential to the meaning of his own film, by putting them in a new context while still retaining and exploiting the context from which they are derived. This is the essence of artistic control, which is so antithetical to Thomas's conception.

Although Antonioni sacrifices the inner exploration of character, which was one of his greatest accomplishments in his earlier films, he does so intentionally in order to achieve a different focus and to develop different implications of his dominant theme. He could not have done so without altering his style.

"BLOW-UP": THOMAS'S SECOND ENCOUNTER, WITH THE STUDENT MIME TROUPE.





Neville Hunnings

OF ALL BRANCHES of the law, one of the most arcane is copyright; and that aspect of copyright which has attracted least attention in England is film copyright. This is unfortunate, for the law is unsatisfactory and there are a number of matters urgently awaiting reform. Some of these are being discussed at the Copyright Conference now being held in Stockholm; but because of the general disinterest in England, the emphasis at the Conference is on a topic (*droits morales*) which is unknown to English law although of lively importance on the Continent, and less on such matters as the suppression of a film to clear the way for a remake (as happened with *Le Jour se Lève* and *Gaslight*), or the position of film archives.

There are basically two laws governing film copyright in England, one for films made before 1957 and another for those made after. This is because it was only in 1956 that a specific film-copyright was created, and it was decided to apply it only to films made after the Act came into force. To add to the confusion, there are also two international conventions: the Berne Convention (or Berne Union), which dates from 1886 and has been amended every twenty years since

1908 (the Stockholm Conference is one of these vicennial occasions), and the Universal Copyright Convention drawn up by Unesco in 1952 mainly to entice the United States into the international copyright fold. For a foreign film to obtain copyright in England it must normally come within one of these two conventions; but U.S.A. (and such countries as Mexico, Argentina and Cuba) is not a member of the Berne Union, and Russia (together with e.g. China, East Germany, Egypt and Malaysia) has never adhered to either convention.

'New films' are those governed by the Copyright Act, 1956, and comprise those which were made after 31 May 1957 (if they are British films, i.e. were made by a British subject or Irish citizen or a resident in Britain, including a company, or were first published in Britain—publication meaning being sold, rented or offered, e.g. in the trade press, but not mere exhibition), or after 26 September 1957 (if they are foreign films, i.e. were made by a citizen of or resident in a country which is a party to the Berne Convention or Universal Copyright Convention or were first published in such a country). Any film

which does not come within these definitions, with certain minor exceptions, will not have copyright protection *as a film*, although there may still be a valid copyright in its script or music.

* * *

The term of copyright in a new film is 50 years, after which the film falls into public domain and may be exhibited without restriction. This rule does not apply to 'old' films and so will not come into force until the year 2007 at the earliest. The 50 years is calculated from the year of registration under the Quota Acts or, if the film is not so registrable, from the year of first publication. Registrable films are defined as all those of standard, i.e. 35 mm., gauge.

The position of unregistered 35 mm. films (e.g. unimported foreign or privately produced films), seems to have been ignored by the legislature and is but one example of the way in which the Act seems to have been concerned exclusively with the normal film industry interests and to have been quite unaware of the existence of any other problems. In the case of newsreels, the period starts from the year in which the principal events depicted occurred.

The 'author' of the film, as the 1956

Act defines it, is its 'maker', i.e. the person or company by whom the arrangements necessary for its making are undertaken; this will normally be the producer or production company. The question of authorship is one of the major discussion points on the Continent; and in France the production company has now been replaced by a group of presumptive co-authors (authors of scenario, adaptation, dialogue, and original work on which the script is based, e.g. novel or play, together with the composer of specially written music and the director of the film). The influence of traditional ideas can be clearly discerned here in the preponderance of *four* literary co-authors (increased still more in the case of multi-scripted Italian films) as against one essentially filmic author; and the exclusion of the other two film creators, editor and cameraman.

The importance of authorship of a film is much greater on the Continent than in Britain, because it there involves not only the property right (which, whoever be the author, will normally be transferred by contract to the production company in any case) but also another right, a *droit moral*, whereby an author has an inalienable right to insist on his work being shown in its original form, uncut (by either producer, distributor or exhibitor). This is not the case in Britain, where the production company may give a blanket authorisation to make cuts, nor in the United States, where George Stevens recently lost his fight to preserve *A Place in the Sun* from mutilation on television. Of course, practical considerations may ensure that a *droit moral* is not always enforced, even where it does exist, but the principle symbolises a view of the film as an art as well as a marketable commodity.

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The copyright in a film really consists of two distinct rights—the copying right (i.e. making a new print or negative or magnetic recording), and the performing right. The latter, which only applies to *public* performances, includes broadcasting; but 'public' is construed more widely than in the case of licensing and censorship, and it seems that any performance except one that is 'domestic and private' or is given in a school to an audience of pupils and teachers will be caught, including exhibitions to clubs and societies.

One particular anomaly relates to fair dealing. In the case of most types of work (written, musical or artistic) it is permissible to use reasonable extracts in works of scholarship, criticism or reporting of current events. This does

not, however, apply to films. Consequently, a television programme, for instance, may not without permission screen shots from a film to illustrate a review or a news item.

A more difficult problem, which relates even more forcibly to 'old' films, concerns the rights in the various components of a film, for the new film copyright is additional to all the others. The actual frame-by-frame photographs, the various types of script and the incidental music all have their own separate copyrights. In the case of the photographs (of practical application in the case of film stills) the term is 50 years from first publication, and the first owner is the person who commissioned the taking of the pictures, i.e. in practice, the production company. Generally, the rights in the film and in the photographs will remain in the same hands throughout their lives, and therefore no problem occurs.

The other rights, however, follow the normal rules for literature and music and last until 50 years after the death of the author. To prevent the chaotic situation of 'old' films once more emerging, the 1956 Act provides that when a film has been the subject of copyright and the period has expired, the film may thenceforth be exhibited in public without infringing any of the other literary, musical, etc. copyrights which may still be alive. But this only applies to the performing right (using already existing prints of the film), and it seems probable that the making of new prints would continue to be unlawful unless permission be obtained from the heirs of the scriptwriter, scenario writer, novelist or playwright, composer and perhaps of the art designer as well. Of course, in many cases these rights will have been originally transferred to the production company and so kept all in one bundle, but there may well be complications.

In particular, where screen rights in, say, a novel have been assigned to a producer for a limited period of perhaps ten years, certain anomalies arise on the expiry of that period. The right to exhibit the resultant film or make new prints or copies of it ceases immediately, and for all practical purposes the film is thenceforth suppressed (unless the special permission of the novelist be obtained); but paradoxically the suppression only lasts while the film itself remains in copyright for the rest of its 50 years. After that, public performances will be allowed even over the veto of the novelist's heirs. The restriction does not, however, apply to the *circulation* of prints which were lawfully made during the concession period: these may be sold or hired out for domestic and private

use without the grant of any permissions, a practice which may become of considerable importance with the spread of sub-standard home movies and is already a protection to collectors.

* * *

Collectors, of course, and film archives are more concerned at the moment with old pre-1957 films, which are largely governed by the Copyright Act, 1911. Old films do not have a separate film copyright; but they may be protected as a 'dramatic work', if the arrangement or acting form or the combination of incidents gives them an original character. This definition would certainly cover fiction films; whether it would cover documentaries and newsreels is more open: possibly the former, probably not the latter.

To acquire its own dramatic copyright, a film must have been first published in either Britain, a Berne Union country, Ghana, Nigeria or, in certain circumstances, U.S.A. Publication in U.S.A. will only qualify if occurring in or immediately after the two world wars, and so only applies to a limited number of American films. But the restriction is not of great practical importance, since American producers and publishers have regularly arranged simultaneous publication in Canada, a Berne Union country; they are enabled to do this by the rule that different acts of publication occurring within 14 days of each other (under the 1956 Act the period is 30 days) are regarded as simultaneous (i.e. all are first publications). Since U.S.A. adhered to the Universal Copyright Convention the need for this subterfuge has gone, and American new films are fully protected under the 1956 Act.

The term of copyright of old films is the usual one of 50 years from the death of the author. The author of an old film would be the person who plans the work and employs others to compose the different parts, i.e. normally the producer—but not the production company, since only a natural person can be a dramatic author.

In addition to this dramatic copyright, the rights in the different parts of the film—script, music, photographs, etc.—all coexist, and the approval of each copyright owner must be obtained before a film may be copied or exhibited. Thus, in practice, the multiplicity of copyright owners in an old film in England may approximate to the multiple co-authorship of films under the new French law. This does not in normal circumstances give rise to difficulties, for a production company obtains the necessary rights by contract from the various owners before

embarking on the film. A notorious exception to this rule was Visconti's *Ossessione*, based without permission on Cain's novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, and consequently the subject of grave distribution difficulties in Britain and U.S.A.

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Until fairly recently, both the old and the new systems worked reasonably well in practice. Films had a short commercial life, and once that was ended producers tended to lose interest in what was done with the film, which was by then written off—with the exception of a few rare individuals like Chaplin, who kept very tight control over all those films of which he owned the copyright. But now that an interest in old films has burgeoned under the impact of television and the proliferating film archives and art houses, they have a substantial cash value which outlives their normal commercial exploitation, and this makes it imperative to know what their copyright position is. For new films this is unlikely to pose any problems: normal commercial prudence will see to it that proper records of all relevant copyrights are kept and passed on.

For old films, however, the position is chaotic. Very few production companies of the Thirties or earlier still exist; and even where they do their records of early films have frequently been weeded out. The disposal of the assets of liquidated companies may, or more probably may not, have specified the copyrights in films which were made by the company but had been written off as having exhausted their commercial potentialities; even where they were expressly mentioned, they would only rarely have been set out with full details of origin.

Two problems have thus arisen for the non-commercial sector generally (especially the educational circuit, including schools, universities, film societies, film archives and collectors, and B.F.I. cinemas): (a) to what extent is the sector bound by the normal copyright rules? and (b) where it is so bound, what is the position in the case of old films of which the records may have been lost?

The position of private film collectors is clear. They may buy and sell prints of films of any gauge without restriction and show them to their families and friends, so long as the shows are domestic and private. As soon as a public element creeps in, e.g. the ability of anyone to join a group on payment of

a small fee, then the exhibition will require copyright permission. The one condition is that the prints themselves were made lawfully, that is by someone who had the appropriate permissions to make copies of the film. If the print was made unlawfully (and this would have to be proved by the person claiming the print from the collector) any copyright owner is entitled to seize the print as if it were his own. If it was made lawfully, but was sold in breach of a contract, the unlawful seller will be liable for damages, but no liability will normally lie on the collector; and in any case, the action would be under the law of contract or tort and not of copyright.

The position of schools is equally clear. Exhibitions before an audience comprising exclusively teachers and pupils and given by a teacher or pupil in the course of the activities of the school do not amount to public exhibitions and consequently do not infringe copyright.

* * *

The position of an archive (of which there are several in Britain, including the National Film Archive, the Imperial War Museum and the Kodak Museum) is more difficult. As there is no requirement for compulsory deposit of copies of films, any acquisition will be by donation, loan or purchase and subjected to any terms imposed by the supplier; and here an archive is in the same position as the private collector. But preservation and cataloguing require that prints be copied, and to fulfil its functions an archive must be able to exhibit its films to scholars engaged in research.

It is a sad lacuna in the 1956 Act that although certain privileges were given to libraries and archives generally, their wording does not allow them to be applied to films as such. In particular, no mention is made of the need to prepare preservation and projection prints for internal use. Screening of films in the collection to archive staff, however, will be regarded as private, as would screening to an individual research worker.

But the more public part of the archive's activity, the distribution of films to film societies, schools and other semi-private groups, and screenings in its own cinemas or as part of courses on the art or technique of the film, are wholly subject to the normal rules of copyright and no special concessions apply.

Where the copyright status of a film is uncertain, and a person claims to have acquired one or more of the copyrights in it, the matter resolves itself into a question of fact and of balancing probabilities. In the absence of specific evidence, it must be assumed as an initial premise that the film was lawfully made—i.e. that the production company had acquired all the relevant copyright permissions. In such a case, it may be presumed that the authors have parted with their own rights and are no longer in a position to assign them to anyone else.

Similarly, in the case of *prints* dating from before about 1910 (when renting replaced the outright sale of prints to showmen as the general trade practice), it may be assumed that the original and subsequent sales of the print included permission to show that print in public until it fell apart. Old films first published outside the Berne Union (or U.S.A. during and after the two world wars) will not have copyright protection in Britain unless their music, script or the original play or novel have been so first published.

* * *

Some of these matters may be settled at the Stockholm conference, although one has doubts; some may be considered in the new American Copyright Bill. But it seems unlikely that Britain will ever develop a practical, coherent law of film copyright until the subject is thoroughly ventilated on all sides—by the trade, lawyers, educationalists, film writers, archives and cinemagoers themselves—and the various competing claims brought out into the open. It is hoped that this article may help to start some such rethinking.

Should the new film copyright be extended to 'old' films? Should other copyright holders be able to control a film once it exists as an artistic entity in its own right? In view of the increasing sale of entertainment films to the public on 8 mm., should films be assimilated more to gramophone records with a power of compulsory licensing? Should there be special provisions for films used for educational purposes outside schools? Should archives have a clearly defined right to copy films for preservation and internal viewing, and also similar rights to those of other libraries and archives? Should the definition of author be changed? Should there be a *droit moral*? These are some of the questions, but it will be some time before we can hope to have the answers.

Colin McArthur

THE REAL PRESENCE



CHARLTON HESTON IN "MAJOR DUNDEE".

"Charlton Heston is an axiom. By himself alone he constitutes a tragedy, and his presence in any film whatsoever suffices to create beauty. The contained violence expressed by the sombre phosphorescence of his eyes, his eagle's profile, the haughty arch of his eyebrows, his prominent cheekbones, the bitter and hard curve of his mouth, the fabulous power of his torso: this is what he possesses and what not even the worst director can degrade. It is in this sense that one can say that Charlton Heston, by his existence alone, gives a more accurate definition of the cinema than films like *Hiroshima mon Amour* or *Citizen Kane*, whose aesthetic either ignores or impugns Charlton Heston."

—Michel Mourlet

WE LIVE IN THE ERA of director's cinema: it is critically unfashionable to write about film stars. This is understandable; the approach to films by way of the stars is the 'popular', that is unsophisticated, approach of the fan magazines. Serious film criticism, especially that of the newer periodicals, is director-orientated to a fault and, perhaps most importantly, the published utterances of directors have not, in general, enhanced the dignity of the stars as performers. Hitchcock is quoted as saying that actors are cattle, Bresson appears to treat his players like marionettes, Milos Forman reputedly achieves his effects by deliberately misleading them, and von Sternberg has written at ponderous length on their vanities and inadequacies. Indeed, the most lasting impression of *Fun in a Chinese Laundry* is of actors and actresses as so many pieces of plasticine to be moulded by the director, elements in his total statement, but of no more intrinsic value than the sets or the costumes they wear:

"invested with great words or with the majesty of a noble thought, the actor is often confused with the source of power; once deprived of that which makes him seem magnificent he deflates like an empty windbag . . ." (p.57)

"... no performer in films has made a lasting impression on me, though the film itself might have done . . ." (p.96)

"therefore I suggest that the actor in films cannot function as an artist . . . but that he is little more than one of the complex materials used in our craft." (p.111)

No serious critic would wish to dislodge the director from his central position in the creative process, but the critical attitude behind von Sternberg's remarks surely over-simplifies the director/actor relationship and ignores completely the qualities that the actor brings to his role irrespective of the director's intention. These qualities are almost entirely physical: the way the actor is built, what his face and body say about the way experience has treated him, the way he walks and talks. The statement made by an actor's

physical attributes can be so intense as to seem positively to mirror his personality and sensibility. On the other hand, he may carry with him into all his roles—in a particular facial gesture or bodily movement—the merest hint of a character limitation. It is partly the suggestion of indecision in Farley Granger's physical presence that makes his involvement with Bruno so believable in *Strangers on a Train*.

The paean to Charlton Heston which forms the opening text of this article demands a cinema of physical appearances, discussable in terms of the physical endowments of the players. This is very close to the 'popular' fan magazine response to the cinema—one which most of us, in some measure, share. It cannot, in itself, sustain a total aesthetic of the cinema, but, with its usefulness very closely defined, it is a valuable tool in the critic's kit. The sort of critical questions it helps to answer are why an actor succeeds in one genre rather than another, to what degree the casting of a particular player affects the total statement of a film and, most interestingly, how far casting has been used as a major artistic device.

The opening quotation ignores the fact that Heston's early career was comparatively obscure and undistinguished, played out competently in urban thrillers, semi-Westerns and adventure yarns. However, his particular physical endowments are now exposed almost exclusively within the framework of the epic, the values and conventions of which add up to . . . Charlton Heston. In other words Charlton Heston is the objective correlative of the epic idea. He has become so by repeated exposure in epic roles until the audience can no longer see the epic hero in proportions other than his. Edgar Morin in his book *The Stars* sees this form of alchemy at the basis of the star system:

"The star determines the many characters of his films; he incarnates himself in them, and transcends them. But they transcend him in their turn; their exceptional qualities are reflected back on and illuminate the star. All the heroes Gary Cooper contains within himself direct him to the presidency of the United States, and, reciprocally, Gary Cooper ennobles and enlarges all the heroes he plays: he *garycooperises* them. Actor and role mutually determine each other. The star is more than an actor incarnating characters, he incarnates *himself in them*, and they become incarnate in him."

There are probably only two other actors who have achieved the total integration with a genre that Heston has achieved with the epic: Henry Fonda with the Western and Humphrey Bogart with the thriller. Bogart was the perfect human embodiment of the values and milieu of the thriller: the kicked-around, lived-in face, the slender, rather puny body, the rasping voice, the gritty humour, all add up to a decidedly

modern, urbanised presence and sensibility which find their truest milieu in the harsh sub-world of the thriller. Henry Fonda emerged, in *My Darling Clementine*, as the archetypal Western hero, possessed of infinite control and gentleness, self-sufficient yet not neurotically self-involved. This image reinforced and lent authority to relatively inferior vehicles such as *Warlock*, *The Tin Star*, and even the television series *Deputy*. Fonda, as the visible embodiment of the Western code, was, by definition, the most consistently moral figure on the American screen, infinitely reassuring in his calm decisiveness.

He passed inevitably, with the death of the Western genre, to his present role as archetypal liberal intellectual in political films such as *Advise and Consent*, *The Best Man* and *Fail Safe*, and in the courtroom drama *Twelve Angry Men*. But the transition is a spurious one. He became the archetypal Western hero primarily because of certain physical characteristics, the way he walked and spoke, the repose of his features, his leanness, his *style* (though the 'feedback' from his roles in *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* and *Drums Along the Mohawk* was important). In his role of liberal intellectual he has to rely more heavily on the actual words he speaks, with the result that his image is now tinged with sanctimoniousness, especially in *Twelve Angry Men*. But the problem here is deeper than Fonda's screen presence, involving American attitudes to intellect and the political affiliations of the men who write and direct movies.

There are other players who, while they do not evoke entire genres in their physical presence, nevertheless have become closely associated with the work of particular directors, ultimately, by a kind of visual shorthand, becoming

images which sum up the complex of values that constitutes a director's vision. John Wayne, too extrovert to be the archetypal Western hero, represents in his physical presence and personality the camaraderie, boisterous good-humour and, on its darker side, the loutishness and insensitivity of the Fordian world. Wayne is probably the classic example of the actor becoming indistinguishable from his roles. To the extent that *The Alamo* is a reflection of Wayne's image, it is astonishingly close to some of the less attractive aspects of Ford's work, most notably in the portrayal of Davy Crockett and his retinue as near-savages whose favourite sport, carried on amid much banter and high spirits, is to punch each other on the jaw.

The list of players who evoke by their physical presence the complex worlds of particular directors could be extended indefinitely (Vitti/Antonioni, Karina/Godard, Mifune/Kurosawa and so on); but there are other players, stars by any criteria, who have never wholly found their niches in the screen's great genres or in the work of particular directors. This may be partly explicable in terms of their screen images. What can explain Burt Lancaster's failure as Wyatt Earp in *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* but the aura of authoritarianism which the actor, inevitably with his particular physical attributes, brings to all his roles, as in *Sweet Smell of Success*, *Elmer Gantry* and *Seven Days in May*?

Kirk Douglas and Richard Widmark have also failed as Western heroes, primarily through the compulsively modern sensibilities and physical presence which best fit them for neurotic or even psychotic roles. Widmark seemed to find his ideal milieu early in his career in the roles of Tommy Udo (*Kiss of Death*), Alec Styles (*The Street with No Name*) and Harry Fabian (*Night and the City*) but, afraid of being typecast, he broke away to play a repetitive series of heroes. That his sensibility and physical attributes are of the twentieth century was conclusively demonstrated by his incongruous performance as the Dauphin in *St. Joan*.

Douglas's essentially 'modern' physical endowments found their most congenial milieu in *Ace in the Hole*, *Champion* and *Detective Story*; and the neurotic, contemporary image established in these films has fed back, to the detriment of his performances, into his Westerns and period films. But we should remember that discussion of an actor's physical endowments and cumulative screen image cannot sustain a total aesthetic of film and that actors may fail for reasons outside their control. Van Heflin in *3.10 to Yuma*, for example, fails ultimately as a Western hero not primarily on account of any physical deficiency but, paradoxically, through Delmer Daves's gift for documentary reconstruction. There is about Heflin in

PLASTICINE FOR STERNBERG . . . EVELYN BRENT IN THE 1929 "UNDERWORLD".



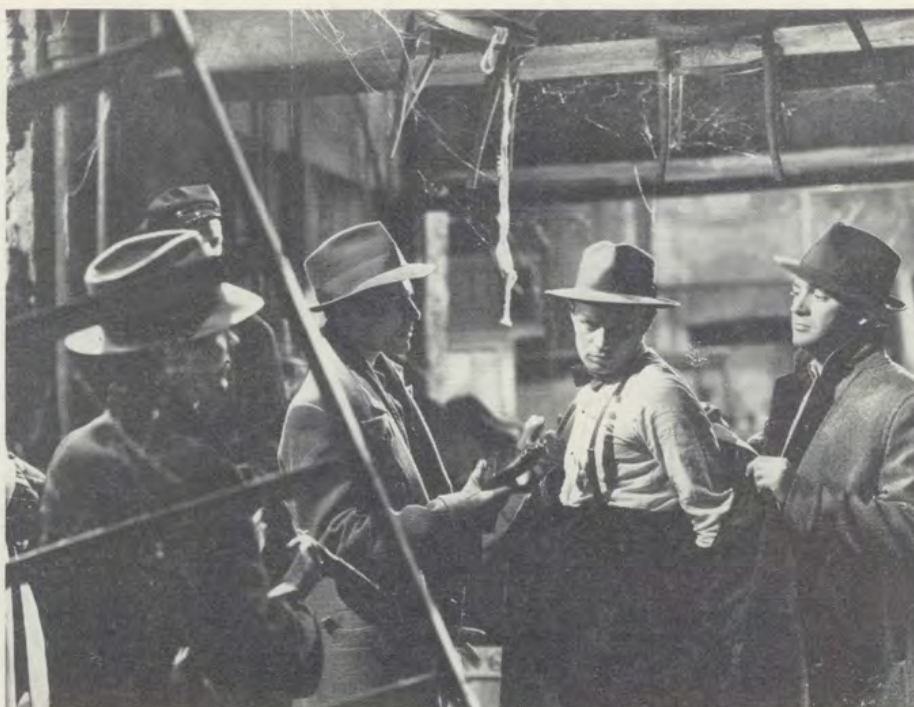
this role the smell of cow dung rather than the odour of sanctity.

Far from being a passive, pliable element in the director's hands, the actor—insofar as he can be separated from the role he plays—may unwittingly determine the success or failure of the director's intentions. For example, it has been suggested that had Cary Grant instead of Rod Taylor played in *The Birds* Hitchcock would have achieved his contrasts of mood more easily. The case of Elia Kazan's *A Face in the Crowd* is even more interesting in its implications for the importance of the actor. The film is about a shrewd, guitar-strumming bum named Lonesome Rhodes (Andy Griffith) who exploits his superficial geniality to become a popular television performer specialising in crackerbarrel philosophy ("The family that prays together stays together"). Drunk with imagined power, he becomes involved in right-wing politics and his growing megalomania is viewed with horror by the woman who loves but rejects him and by a liberal intellectual (like Kazan himself) who works as a hack writer (Walter Matthau). Lonesome is finally undone by a *deus ex machina*, but by this time the liberal intellectual, the ostensible hero of the piece, has quit his sordid job and is writing an exposé of Lonesome.

Now Walter Matthau's screen presence carries a certain aura of smugness which perfectly suited his roles in *Strangers When We Meet* and *Fail Safe*, but which is disconcerting in an ostensible hero. It may be that, due to the tradition of anti-intellectualism in American life (an odd compound of hatred, suspicion and respect), no American actor can play the intellectual without appearing to preen himself as a member of an outcast, misunderstood, but inherently superior minority. However, there is always the intriguing possibility that Kazan was aware that to write a novel (or for that matter, make a movie) exposing Lonesome Rhodes was precious little, and cast Walter Matthau in the role of liberal intellectual in full knowledge that his somehow inappropriate screen presence would direct the audience to criticise the validity of his actions.

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But, as Edgar Morin points out, it is not just the actor's physical endowments that make his screen image. He goes from role to role, but each role is assimilated to his cumulative screen presence until, as a mature player, he carries with him into every part he plays echoes of his own screen past. Despite this obvious notion, few directors consciously allude to their players' screen past. In Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing* there is a series of such allusions which add authority to the film. To put it another way, Kubrick uses casting as a major artistic device. Our response to Sterling Hayden's despair at the end of *The Killing* is deepened if we recall his



RICHARD WIDMARK IN "THE STREET WITH NO NAME".

role in *The Asphalt Jungle*, and Coleen Gray's situation is more poignant if we remember her role in *Kiss of Death*. Similarly, we should see Elisha Cook Jr. through the accumulated humiliations of *The Big Sleep*, Ted de Corsia in terms of *Murder Inc.*, Joe Sawyer in terms of any number of Thirties gangster movies and Marie Windsor as the archetypal screen moll.

Kubrick uses the accumulated audience responses to these players in their former roles to give a solidarity to his characters wholly matched by the superb script and his own masterly direction. Godard surely had *Les Quatre Cents Coups* in mind when he cast Jean-Pierre Léaud as the unhappy Paul in *Masculin Féminin*, and Martin Ritt underlined the implicit criticism of the Bond cult in *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold* by casting Bernard Lee, M in the Bond films, as a hapless grocer whom Lemass punches in the eye. However, the most striking directorial allusion to his actors' screen past is Andrzej Munk's in *Eroica*.

The film is in two parts, the second of which is set in a prisoner-of-war camp for Polish officers. Munk demonstrates the emptiness of the code of honour by which the regular officers live and shows that their greatest triumph, Lieutenant Zawistowski's escape, is baseless. For Zawistowski is still in the camp, a pitiful wreck of a man, hiding in the roof. The film succeeds in terms of its own action, but the casting adds a dimension to the critique, for Zawistowski is played by Tadeusz Lomnicki, who played Stach, the hopeful young resistance fighter in Andrzej Wajda's *A Generation*.

It is no secret that Munk's film was an attempt to counter the wallowing in heroic nostalgia of the first two films in the Wajda trilogy. The principal spokes-

man for sanity and anti-heroism in the second part of *Eroica* is the veteran ghetto fighter Lieutenant Kurzawa, played by Josef Nowak who, as the last survivor of Wajda's doomed heroes, crawled back into the sewers at the end of *Kanal*. Munk ensures a continuity in our response from Wajda's work to his own by casting Lomnicki and Nowak in these roles. He is saying in effect, "Here is what has become of the young hero," and in the case of Kurzawa/Nowak, "Here is the proper response to the experience of the sewers."

This article is an attempt to demonstrate that valid critical points can be made about movies in terms of the physical attributes of the players and the 'feedback' that occurs from one role to another. If further proof is needed that the approach can yield useful insights, consult the critical writings of the late Robert Warshow, who, because of the immediacy of the cinema experience, so often articulated his response in terms of the players:

"The choice of Alan Ladd to play the leading role (in *Shane*) is alone an indication of the film's tendency. Actors like Gary Cooper or Gregory Peck are in themselves, as material objects, 'realistic', seeming to bear in their bodies and faces mortality, limitation, the knowledge of good and evil. Ladd is a more 'aesthetic' object, with some of the 'universality' of a piece of sculpture; his special quality is in his physical smoothness and serenity, unworldly and yet not innocent, but suggesting that no experience can really touch him. Stevens has tried to freeze the Western myth once and for all in the immobility of Alan Ladd's countenance."

After a surfeit of *mise-en-scène* and committed criticism, this reminds us that the cat can be skinned in other ways.

FILM REVIEWS

JUDEX

LIKE THE GREAT SILENT COMEDIES, like Gish's rosebud lips and little Mary's ringlets, Feuillade's serials are what they are: no amount of loving pastiche can ever recapture their precious amalgam of naïveté, genius and faded celluloid. And if Franju's *Judex* (Contemporary) is a perfect *homage* to the master, it is because he has wrought a subtle sea-change in his material which lends it an entirely new dimension. Heralded by a quaint iris-in, the opening sequence is pure pastiche, with wicked Banker Favraux consulting a bumbling private detective about the threatening letter he has received from Judex, while Judex himself (Channing Pollock) hovers in disguise; but as the camera moves slowly in to one of those windows which open onto Franju's private vision, it discovers a new enchanted world where the fragile Jacqueline (Edith Scob), fluttering past dressed all in white, tremulously awaits her destiny on a sun-drenched lawn.

From there on, Franju parts company with the poetic *grisaille* of Feuillade's urban landscape of cobbled streets, crumbling buildings and cosy bourgeois interiors, and his film is dominated by the natural world, by the verdant lawns and leafy driveways bathed by the textures of darkness and light as they alternately threaten and protect poor Jacqueline. In this context, *Judex* is no longer a mere Zorro figure, a mundane elder son sworn by his mother to avenge the family honour, but instead a strange, almost supernatural being, possessed of the gift of life and death and commanding the loyalty of the natural world. He is, in fact, the white knight of legend hurrying to the defence of the princess in distress.

The symbolism of the film, black against white, is beautifully controlled, emerging quite naturally through the rivalry between Jacqueline's shimmering white and the *collant noir* of the wicked Diana Monti; through the infinite tenderness with which Judex cradles the dead dove in his hand before bringing it back to life, as he cleaves his way through the guests at the ball where he liberates Jacqueline from her dreaded fiancé; and above all, through the superbly contrasting snow-and-velvet textures of Marcel Fradetal's photography. It is,

moreover, a symbolism which is contained and absorbed by the magical, fairytale aura of the film. No one, least of all Judex himself, ever explains how the death (or temporary demise) of Favraux is achieved at the ball; and no need, because the whole conception of the scene, with the guests metamorphosed by weird bird-masks, with Judex making his hieratic progress through the salon holding the dead bird aloft, and the clock solemnly chiming midnight, is a preparation for the extraordinary—a ceremonial of death, as Franju himself has called it.

The mood is carried over in the superb sequence of the abduction of the chloroformed Jacqueline by Diana and Morales, where the two black-clad forms stealing down the dark, shadowy driveway are suddenly stilled as four Alsations loom silently out of the night. Wordlessly they put Jacqueline down and make their escape, turning back to see one dog standing gravely over her, its paw gently raised in protection and benediction. As in the weird and wonderful river sequence of Laughton's *Night of the Hunter*, one feels here that the natural world has come to Jacqueline's aid, protecting her against the evil spirits of nightmare as she sleeps. Nothing is said, the dogs neither threaten nor snarl: Diana and Morales recognise that the laws of a natural hierarchy must be obeyed, and like Nosferatu retreating before the sun's rays, they retire defeated.

On reflection, silence seems to be one of Franju's main weapons. It is remarkable how little dialogue there is in the film, most of what there is being used to convey plot points in the manner of the subtitles of silent days; but this is probably less because Franju wishes to respect the Feuillade aesthetic than because he knows that terror and fantasy are essentially private, an experience of solitude and silence. In how many films is the terror dispatched as soon as the heroine screams? . . . But Jacqueline, like the dove she is, trembles fearfully and without utterance. Wandering alone through the corridors of the deserted house after the supposed death of her father, she is menaced by the silence, by the doors open on empty

rooms, by the staircase spiralling hungrily above her, oppressed by a fear that is no less tangible because it is inexpressible.

Not all of the film is on this level, of course. Towards the end, the serial plot begins to cumulate, amiably enough but on the level of brilliant pastiche, as Diana Monti (Francine Bergé) prowls in nun's habit, rattletrap cars roar urgently through the countryside, and Morales finds instant remorse on the point of inadvertently murdering his own father. Legend returns with Daisy (Sylva Koscina), a guardian angel appearing out of the night with her circus caravan to lead the rescue in a fantastic rooftop pursuit, black against white again, which hurls Diana to her death on the ground far below, where she lies cradled by the forgiving wild flowers and mourned by the little boy. When darkness is dispelled, what is there to fear? And in the final scene on the pale, wind-swept beach, still watched over by an attendant dog while a dove flutters away to the sky, Judex and his beloved are reunited. For eternity.

TOM MILNE

ULYSSES

THERE WAS A BAD MOMENT in May when a reversal of the GLC's decision to allow *Ulysses* to be shown uncut seemed quite possible. If that had happened Joseph Strick would no doubt by now be something of a hero, the champion of reason and the avant-garde against privileged illiteracy. But common sense prevailed, and *Ulysses* (Columbia) has been shown complete and with a London X Certificate. Lady Dartmouth needn't have bothered. Strick has emasculated Joyce's classic far more effectively than she could ever have done.

The problem with adapting a work of this scale is one of selection. Not everyone in the audience is going to agree about what goes and what stays, but one may nevertheless legitimately complain about a principle of selection which throws out the original's

"JUDEX": EDITH SCOB AS JACQUELINE.



true meaning. The 36-page Sirens' episode, for instance, is cut down to a brief sequence of Bloom masturbating at the sight of the provocative Gerty MacDowell: in place of the book's tenderly awful picture of a young girl's romanticism and a lonely man's erotic reverie, Strick offers only the meaningless event which he mistakenly imagines it is all about. Similarly with the 44 pages of Molly Bloom's monologue: the simple sexual references remain, the complex exposition of a woman's thoughts and recollections largely goes.

Only a decidedly cursory and vulgar reading of the novel, one feels, could have produced a result like this. And where is the imaginative quality of the original? There is a dizzying moment in the book when Bloom and Stephen Dedalus come out into Bloom's garden to confront 'the heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit'; at this point of the film some attempt at imaginative re-creation might have been expected, but the camera remains complacently rooted to the earth, as if unaware of the words being spoken. 'Unaware' is perhaps as good a word as any to describe the film's misplaced confidence in its material.

There is some attempt at the humour of the original, and Milo O'Shea's performance as Bloom is sympathetic, though lightweight. There is, however, a failure to see *Ulysses* as a novel in which the reader is constantly sensible of the author's presence. A recognition of Joyce's participation is the first, elementary step a reader has to make in coming to *Ulysses*; it is the single key to the fluctuations in tone, the experiments in form, the humour and the irony. Without Joyce, this *Ulysses* is a *Hamlet* without the Prince; a void gapes at its very centre. If in the film it is hard to discern any thematic link between Bloom and Stephen, or to see what purpose is served by (for instance) the scene of Stephen's conversation with his headmaster, or the scene in the newspaper office, it is because of the extraordinary thinness of incident revealed in the book when the author is not there. The novel *Ulysses* can be described in all sorts of ways, but it emphatically cannot be seen as a string of impersonal events.

One apparently thoughtless decision which impoverishes the film is the casual updating of the action to the present day. Joyce wrote the book in Italy at the beginning of the Twenties, but he wrote specifically of Dublin as he knew it in 1904. Deprived of that carefully built-up setting a lot of the film is either meaningless, or meaningful in the wrong way. The night-town sequence becomes pure fantasy: in 1904 it could be seen as fantasy injected into the reality of Dublin prostitution. The two British soldiers of the nighttown sequence had appropriateness in 1904, but none now. The words 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' have to a certain extent altered in meaning, with there no longer being an élite Protestant class.

Since the last war we are more squeamish about the way we use the word 'Jew', and the scene in the pub in which Bloom's Jewishness is the subject of debate therefore has an emphasis in the film different from that of the original; in the film the audience sides at once with Bloom, whereas in the book there is a humorous objectivity of tone which prohibits such an easy attitude ('And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: *Elijah! Elijah!* And he answered with a main cry: *Abba! Adonai!* And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the bright-



"ULYSSES": BARBARA JEFFORD, MILO O'SHEA.

ness at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel').

The sound synchronisation is bad. The music behind some of the dialogue seemed to me unnecessary and distracting. Most of the acting is competent, with the actors valiantly trying to cope with dialogue originally written to be read on the page; and only one part—Buck Mulligan—seriously defeats the performer. The wide-screen camera is static. Basically Strick has treated his idea of Joyce with respect—one might say, with superstition—and this has resulted in a glum paraphrasing of the text in place of a fresh act of creative imagination. Furthermore, Joyce's book is full of a sense of the author's enjoyment, which can be felt from the opening paragraph beginning 'Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead' to Molly's final 'yes I said yes I will yes.' But the film is quite without any sense of creative delight.

The trouble with all this is that a great many people are now going to take their idea of what Joyce was up to from the film rather than from the book. To them *Ulysses* will seem to be a boring, if dirty series of disconnected sketches, a kind of egghead *Mondo Cane*.

JAMES PRICE

ALONE ON THE PACIFIC

THE RECONSTRUCTION of a single-handed voyage from Osaka to San Francisco (the original event was in 1962) seems an unlikely choice for anything but a formal documentary film. As one might expect, however, Ichikawa's *Alone on the Pacific* (Connoisseur) makes a far richer meal of it than this. In his hands, the inevitable flashbacks to the early difficulties undergone on land by the would-be voyager, Horie, become as vital to the film's theme as is the struggle with the sea itself. The impersonal resistance of the Pacific, in fact, is shown to

be a relatively manageable challenge after the obstructive disinterest, and even hostility, expressed by Horie's family and countrymen.

In calmly going ahead with his plan despite all opposition, he is escaping as much from human defeatism as from the crushing uniformity of big city life that Ichikawa summarises so superbly with a handful of telephoto shots. Although the piled cars and teeming faces are there at the end of the voyage as at the beginning, the escapist has successfully asserted his right to independence of their tyranny. Their echo summons him in the form of a telephone call from his family, but he sleeps on undisturbed.

Ichikawa is concerned here, as usual, with the fine distinction between individualism and self-centredness. Without belittling his hero's achievement, he affectionately emphasises Horie's clumsy and boorish qualities—particularly with his graceless acceptance of the parting gifts from his mother and sister. The youth nearly blows himself up by cooking with beer, he goes swimming without noticing a shark, and he gets himself knocked out like a silent comedy clown, while his tears over a sentimental pop-tune, or his modest retirement below deck to change his pants when nothing is in view but the sea, demonstrate amiably enough that he is no more than fallibly, averagely, human.

But his parade of mistakes, misjudgments, and gentle idiocies goes deeper than slapstick, as Ichikawa signposts in the scenes when Horie talks to himself—a visible, tangible, and independent self. As the voyager worries and argues over the course he is following, we grow to realise the particularly personal value of his splendid isolation. His journey is across weaknesses and doubts—and at its close the voyager reclines exhausted in an upholstered armchair against a wall of blazing, clinical whiteness. Clear links, then, with for example *Fires on the Plain* and *An Actor's Revenge*, although neither the doomed, tottering soldier and his resistance to cannibalism, nor the sensitive Yuki and his

tragic resignation to the need for murder, have the robust resilience of the introspective sailor who seems indestructible even when swamped by the fiercest of typhoons. Of all Ichikawa's self-questioning heroes, Horie always manages to look as if he'll produce the right answers somehow.

One need hardly mention that the film is, of course, beautifully made. What is particularly striking is the effortlessness of it all, the fluency with which Ichikawa describes each stage of the voyage. He films from all angles, including helicopter shots from above and underwater shots from below, yet there is never a false note—not even in the cabin scenes which presumably were shot in a studio. For all the storm sequences, what is conveyed most strongly and typically by Yoshihiro Yamazaki's brilliant photography is a dream-like sense of peace, with the tiny boat coasting along in sunlight while its passenger fiddles with a kettle or hangs his washing out to dry. By comparison, the flashbacks have a visible gloom, filmed in the dark recesses of the father's factory or the claustrophobic shadows of the family home—although these are perhaps the scenes that Ichikawa handles best, magnificently served as he is by Natto Wada's writing of dialogue.

The gruffly uncomprehending father who finally abandons all effort even to speak to the son who shows no interest in spare car parts, the grumbling mother who accompanies each meal with a protracted whine about the strong probability of catastrophe and yet produces some crumpled money from her apron to help the boy on his way, and the enigmatic dead-pan sister who makes the sudden and surprising comment to the press that she knew her brother would make it all along—these are the characters who bring us closer to Horie than could be accomplished by his own commentary alone. And Ichikawa sets them out across his vast screen with unfaltering visual flair; in particular the scenes at the workshop, beginning with an oppressive overhead shot, show father and son drifting further and further apart until they are at opposite sides of the frame; while the arguments around the table at home are a lesson in what can be done with deep-focus staging. If *Alone on the Pacific* makes no claim to be Ichikawa's greatest film, it remains a delightful demonstration of the director's extraordinary versatility.

PHILIP STRICK

HEART OF A MOTHER and LENIN IN POLAND

ALMOST FROM THE BEGINNING, the Soviet cinema has been obsessed with Lenin as a dramatic character. He at least has remained a constant factor, throughout all the political vicissitudes of the last four decades; in recent years, the quest for Lenin the man has removed some of the godlike trappings and it has even been possible for the Russians to make little jokes about him.

As folk-hero and revolutionary teacher rolled into one, he reappears as middle-aged and balding in Youtkevich's *Lenin in Poland* (1966, Contemporary), and as a young man sharing the joys and trials of family life in Donskoi's *Heart of a Mother* (1965), which also takes in his early revolutionary activities when he goes 'out in the world'. Although the approach of both directors is quite different, both have made the films one would have expected—Donskoi, slow,

affectionate and closely related to the feelings of his family group (which is never directly identified as Lenin's, except that the family name Oulianov is used); Youtkevich, sardonic and a little sly and laced with grotesqueries associated with the Proletkult Theatre and Youtkevich's own film contemporaries of the Twenties.

Donskoi's film, intentionally or not, casts a nostalgic eye backwards over all his previous work from the Gorki trilogy onwards. Time and time again, the favourite images recur: the little nineteenth century town shining in the afternoon sun, the arrival of a steamer (a beautiful moment, this, as the family descends to a landing-stage bustling with tradesmen and officials), nights on the river with fires flickering on the shore and a convict boat glimpsed in the distance with its melancholy cargo crushed together on the deck. Perhaps most memorable is the long sequence following the father's death. The family are gathered silently in the living-room while the mother slumps miserably in a chair. Slowly she rises and moves into the garden, while the children watch through the snow-spattered windows. Walking to the grave, she rests for a moment and is marvellously framed in a briefly-held shot against a tree with the branches and leaves festooned about her. This is the Donskoi of the pure, poetic imagination, untrammelled at this stage in the film by the necessity to show the young Lenin as the official histories would like him to be seen.

Youtkevich takes up his hero's life soon after the outbreak of World War One, when Lenin was sheltering in Poland. There are no words except Lenin's own in the form of an interior monologue (a device which would work better if spoken more intelligently than in the version seen over here). From the beginning, he is presented as an observer, musing over the stupidities of those who put him in solitary confinement and always searching for the connections between his present condition and what he conceives to be historically inevitable. As played by Maxim Shtraukh, he emerges as a tetchy, inquisitive, rather likeable little man, who suffers a momentary tremor as he reluctantly agrees to his young companion's request to enter a church ('In any case, I felt it was only a little sin'). When, after roaming the countryside and making

friends with everyone he meets, he does come to grips with the forces who oppose him—Czarist officialdom and the military—Youtkevich shows the enemy as essentially childish oafs with curly moustachios, in a series of vignettes whose origins can be traced back at least as far as Eisenstein's *Strike*.

Donskoi, on reaching the point when members of Lenin's family suffer imprisonment and exile for complicity in attacks on the Czar, takes an easier way out. The latter half of his film is noticeably less personal, with some pretty didactic moralising and stiff playing from the Czarist heavies. Elena Fadeyeva as the mother also overworks that glum, staring look which East European actresses assume when they are supposed to be feeling particularly humanistic. In a way, Donskoi's film (we have so far seen only the first of its two parts) suffers from being a little too predictable in its aims: basically, it is an *hommage* film, which is most successful when it breaks out into those flights of fancy which have little to do with narrative necessities.

Both directors shoot in black-and-white. 'Scope and both films have an extraordinary feeling for settings and costumes—Youtkevich, in particular, employing a bare, elusive style with much emphasis on walls and open spaces. Neither film, of course, tells the whole truth about Lenin; perhaps he is still too much of a father figure to be seen entirely in the round, warts and all. Donskoi communicates most when he is dealing with small, private relationships; Youtkevich when his hero is musing quizzically over the state of a world which appears to him to veer disconcertingly between tragedy, farce and sudden, sharp glimpses of happiness. Both betray an almost desperate nostalgia for an era when young men recited defiant poems on the river shore or gathered under the country sun in thick, stuffy suits to discuss all that needed to be done.

JOHN GILLET

CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT

ORSON WELLES'S *FALSTAFF* film is largely made up from the two parts of *Henry IV*, with the Battle of Shrewsbury (end of Part I) occurring halfway through, the renunciation of Falstaff by the young king ('I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers') at the end, and Falstaff's death (*Henry V*) as a coda. The main story is to do with the education by Falstaff of Prince Hal. Falstaff is several roles in one—licensed buffoon, servant, substitute-father, fellow-conspirator—but in Welles's version he is, above other things, a tutor. He talks like a don, for the sake of exercise and because it's his job to talk, but like a don who knows that no one listens any more; and what he says is not all that important, anyway. Like some of the best dons it's what he *is* that counts: with his gross person, his cowardice, his rationalism, his insistence on the pursuit of pleasure, he is a notably corrective exemplar to put before a man whose life is to be narrowly dedicated to the ideals of kingship. Welles gives a magnificent performance.

The young king's rejection of Falstaff is one of the two keys to Welles's interpretation, and it is several times anticipated: even at the height of their riot Prince Hal knows that he will one day renounce Falstaff, and Falstaff knows it too. The other key is in the

"ALONE ON THE PACIFIC": YUJIRO ISHIHARA.





MAXIM SHTRAUKH IN "LENIN IN POLAND".

title, which comes from Part II of *Henry IV*: 'We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.' Youth is past, an age is gone, *où sont les neiges d'antan?* More precisely, as Welles has himself explained, it is the idea of a vanished Merrie England, a Merrie England irrevocably gone, a kind of lost virtue, which establishes the film's sombre, melancholy tone. There is little spontaneity or gaiety about Falstaff's drunkenness and fornications. For Hal, his princehood is a term of trial, and for Falstaff it is a period of an uneasy friendship and the hectic performance of a doomed role. Falstaff's pleasures are adulterated by the same compulsion towards self-destruction which attracted Welles in *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Kane*, *Quinlan* and *Arkadin*.

The action behind the principal figures supports this interpretation. Gielgud's rather ghostly Henry IV is the usurper who cannot teach his son to be a king, and who is rather taught by him (the final exchange of speeches) that 'what in me was purchased/ Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort.' Tony Beckley's Poins undergoes an unpredictable relationship with the prince which parallels Falstaff's; the Poins/Hal dialogue from the second act of Part II ('Doth it show vilely in me to desire small beer?') is handled to this effect with particular precision. Norman Rodway does a roaring Hotspur who takes his bath to the sound of trumpets and whose presence shows the audience that the manly virtues are not in themselves enough. The battle sequence, conceived on a different imaginative level from the rest of the film, is a grisly affair in which the panoply of medieval chivalry becomes a bloody farce as, first in rapid motion then in slow, men hack each other to death in the mud. As he dies at the prince's hands Hotspur, wholly in character, cries 'I better brook the loss of brittle life/Than those proud titles thou hast won of me,' while Hal is left to make reflections on death which, though conventional enough, can in context be seen to be a further stage in his development. It is a pity that Keith Baxter's playing as the prince is so modern and *angst*-ridden; given the

structure of the adaptation a calmer and more reticent performance would have done equally as well.

Chimes at Midnight (Planet) is undoubtedly Welles's most finished and balanced adaptation from Shakespeare; in fact, it is undoubtedly one of the few of Welles's films in which the intention has been methodically carried through to the end. Yet it is somehow a less than satisfactory experience for the audience. However Welles may try to bluff it out, the poor sound synchronisation, and the absence of perspective on the soundtrack, are jarringly obtrusive (though by contrast the musical score to the battle sequence is imaginative and works very well). More seriously still, the famous visual style seems to have become not so much a *means* of expression as an *accompaniment* to expression: Shakespeare's words, Welles's scenario, and the performances of Welles and the other actors, don't require the kind of buttressing which the camera and the lighting seek to give them.

There are many very beautiful visual compositions in *Chimes at Midnight*, but too often (though again I except the battle, which has no words, no recognisable actors, and a self-contained authority of its own) these beautiful compositions seem over-deliberate and predictable; there is an academicism of approach which quickly becomes tiresome. There are also awkward shifts in visual style. The interior set for the Boar's Head tavern, Russian in feeling and handled with a Wellesian sense of space, is an imaginative and detailed reconstruction which functions well on a realistic level. On the other hand, the imposing and draughty interiors of the king's palace, with their huge and dwarfing columns, are intended to convey emotions of majesty and solitariness; they are actors themselves, not merely settings. There is also a vast battlemented skyline with the apparently symbolic meaning of the City, or Military Power. On a second viewing of the film I was forced to realise that the Welles I was admiring was the actor, not the film-maker. The creative

act at the heart of *Chimes at Midnight* is an act of imaginative impersonation: it has nothing essentially to do with the cinema.

Margaret Rutherford makes a fine Mistress Quickly, and movingly delivers her speech after Falstaff's death. Walter Chiari's Silence is very funny. As for Welles himself, this Falstaff may be his greatest role. It is a highly intelligent and complex interpretation, and it is carried through with exactly the right degrees of force and subtlety and feeling. And no doubt that is the way to look upon *Chimes at Midnight*: as a sensitive and honest framework for a glowing and aristocratic performance.

JAMES PRICE

MEET WHIPLASH WILLIE

WHY MEET WHIPLASH WILLIE? What's wrong with *The Fortune Cookie* for a title? At least it has the virtue of sounding like a comedy, which Billy Wilder's new film is, rather than a B-Western, which it emphatically isn't. The new title does not even have the advantage over the original in mere intelligibility: before going to the cinema I knew what a fortune cookie was, but I needed the film to explain to me all about whiplash lawyers and their way of life. Still, taken with the noticeable delay there has been in the film's arriving at all, this title dicking seems to suggest a certain amount of doubt on United Artists' part about how they should present the film. And here, at least, one appreciates their dilemma.

But then Wilder is never all that easy. With the gleeful vulgarity of *Stalag 17* or *Kiss Me Stupid* we all know where we are, even if it is somewhere that the more delicate of us may not choose to be. But as a rule he chooses not to isolate his wilful bad taste. Instead, he pushes drama further than anyone else would (in Hollywood, anyway) towards raving melodrama; he deliberately scatters nice, innocent little films like *The Seven Year Itch* with almost subliminal obscenities; or he plays, as in *The Apartment*, a dangerous game of mixing genres, so that no one can be quite sure from one minute to the next which way he should be taking the film. The treatment is tonic, but like many of the most effective tonics, it can leave a nasty taste in the mouth. And so it is with *Meet Whiplash Willie*, another of Wilder's sweet-sour cocktails. If it were just ruthless comedy everything would be quite straightforward. So it would if the story were treated instead as a drama of conscience leading to a sentimental conclusion. But Wilder being Wilder, it is both at the same time, and that is where the trouble comes in.

As written (by Wilder and his old collaborator I. A. L. Diamond), the script boldly presses into double harness two characters conceived in entirely different conventions. The hero, Harry Hinkle, is a good guy who has always been a loser because he is too soft and reasonable. He is a dramatic character who hardly ever does anything funny on his own behalf; Jack Lemmon plays him, as required, dead straight. The hero's tempter, his brother-in-law Willie Gingrich, is in contrast a figure of grotesque comedy, conceived (or is it just the legal background which makes one think so?) along positively Dickensian lines. He has the notion of building up TV cameraman Harry's minor shake-up in a sideline football accident until it sounds so dangerous that he can confidently launch a



"MEET WHIPLASH WILLIE".

million-dollar action against all even remotely concerned. And his twists and turns, plots and plans are really the centre of the film; Walter Matthau is the comic, while Jack Lemmon, from his hospital bed or wheelchair, is reduced for most of the film to playing his feed.

This is all very well: they make a great team. But the ultimate trouble with the film is that it obstinately remains two films, and Jack Lemmon's film cannot indefinitely play feed to Walter Matthau's. There are inklings from quite early on that things will turn soft in the end, that the good, decent guy in Harry will win out, that he will see through his calculating wife and realise that his friendship with good, warm-hearted, coloured Boom-Boom Jackson, the footballer who first knocked him for six, is tied up with his integrity as a human being and worth making sacrifices for. Inklings, but we may choose to ignore them, and Wilder at least lets us; they are there, but they are not forced under our noses.

For most of the way the comedy is hard, clear and ruthless, with a lot of funny lines and a bright, efficient surface—even to the appearance of modish chapter headings for the main phases of the action. And the end, when it comes, is quite quickly over, with Willie still unrepentant, figuring out how to sue his triumphant opponents for invasion of privacy. Not, in the last analysis, quite one of Wilder's best, but from the comedy-starved Hollywood of today, more than enough to be going on with.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW

BERNARD CHANTICLEER'S PROBLEM is that he doesn't know what to call his father/dad/pop. And that's really the trouble with *You're a Big Boy Now* (Warner-Pathé): it shows every sign of knowing what it is doing, but never quite decides how to do it. Francis Ford Coppola (last seen as one of

the scriptwriters on *Is Paris Burning?*) runs the gamut of New Wave effects—handheld cameras, jump cuts, captions, speeded-up motion—and more often than not gets away with it. But by the end this multi-coloured balloon of a film has lost a lot of its air.

What saves the film from being just another amalgam of ill-digested tricks is its freshness. Coppola borrows freely, but openly—and unlike so many other would-be Lesters, he never winks knowingly at his audience. The tricks are there, but absorbed in a way that makes them look indigenous. The style, in fact, fits the script (loosely adapted by Coppola from a novel by David Benedictus), and only at the end does one sense a note of uneasy imitation. And here it's the style that matters, for the script is, on the surface at least, a little too conscious of its own eccentric creations. Gap-toothed Bernard (amiably played by Peter Kastner) is a Salinger-derived 19-year-old, a little late in waking up to the realisation that in the big world around him he's a bit of a greenhorn. When he is not roller-skating through the stacks of the New York Public Library where he works, Bernard spends his time at home with Mother (Geraldine Page), anxious and possessive, and given to sending him locks of her hair with her letters, Father (Rip Torn), who keeps his eye on rare books and female junior assistants in the library, and his dog, which he calls Dog.

Bernard's way of getting away from it all is his own kind of free association: 'Nigger Go Home' scrawled in the subway leads him to 'My Heart's in the Highlands' and from there to a Negro piper leading his flock across Central Park. His road to experience is a very off-Broadway actress called Barbara Darling (Elizabeth Hartman), busy dictating to her dwarf companion the story of her youthful mismanagement at the hands of an albino hypnotherapist with a wooden leg. Add that Bernard's landlady (Julie Harris) is a repressed maiden called Miss Thing who keeps a battling rooster on her landing, and it all sounds more than a little arch.

It says much for Coppola's direction, though, that the film is so much better to

look at than it is to describe. Some of the ideas (the type-written captions, for instance, or the whole-cast chase at the end) don't come off, some of the characters (the hypnotherapist, for one) are just too absurd, and the final free-wheeling gambol through a mound of pretzels and out into the streets falls very flat. But the film's sheer inventiveness almost carries it through, and its freshly shot New York locations make a pleasant change from all those studio-confected streets and subways. On the evidence of *You're a Big Boy Now* Coppola's talent is undisciplined; but there's no doubt that he has it.

DAVID WILSON

EL DORADO

THE CREDITS GO UP against vividly coloured paintings of the old West, while an unseen voice sings one of those yearning ballads evoking the life of a wanderer in search of his El Dorado. The mood, casual and timeless, is thus set for a classic Western opening scene: gunfighter Cole Thornton (John Wayne), hired by a wicked cattle baron to keep the settlers in their place, rides into town to see what sheriff J. P. Harrah (Robert Mitchum) is going to do about it. J. P. pulls a gun—"just till I know which side you're on"—but soon puts it down, for sheriff and gunfighter are old friends. A quintessential Hawks situation, in fact, neatly pinpointing a relationship which provides the motif for *El Dorado* (Paramount).

Cole, of course, turns down his assignment on learning that the settlers are in trouble, but rides away again when he accidentally shoots one of the settlers' sons, and receives a bullet in the back from a vengeful daughter. He hurries back on hearing that J. P., his heart having been broken by a travelling lady, has gone on a long and enormous booze, a sufficiently ripe reason for one of those bravura scenes which Hawks and his writer, Leigh Brackett, stage with such obvious relish, leaving less interesting bits of narrative to look after themselves à la Ford.

With J. P. scarcely capable of speech or

"YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW": ELIZABETH HARTMAN, PETER KASTNER.



movement, Thornton tries a little slapping ("don't trouble—he can't feel it," mutters Arthur Hunnicutt's whiskery deputy), but only a vile potion, laced with gunpowder, has the desired sobering effect. The comparisons with *Rio Bravo*, at first mere hints, are now fully formed, with Mitchum standing in for Dean Martin and a lot of scene-pinching from the earlier film. The two old pros are joined in their campaign by James Caan as Mississippi, a game enough lad with a knife but positively dangerous when given a great blunderbuss to play with. Hawks constantly plays off the relaxed professionalism of the older men against the younger one's gaucheness and strangely educated charm. An attack on the cattle baron's men secreted in a church ends with flying bullets, a fine tintinnabulation of bells, and Mississippi whooping because he winged a one-legged man. But Thornton neatly puts him down by telling the truth: "He was limping when he got here."

With silent men stalking shadowy streets looking for an unseen enemy, and a hired gunman out to get the upholders of law and order, there is less time than usual for dallying with women (and no real equivalent of Angie Dickinson). Only near the end when Thornton, standing in for the wounded J. P., says farewell to his girl before facing the villains alone, does Hawks allow himself a touching close-up as she waves after him. And so to a final shoot-up which is as quick and decisive as the street fight in *Rio Bravo*: two strong men face each other and, inevitably, one dies on the sidewalk, acknowledging defeat with a sour protest. "But you're too good to give a chance to," replies Thornton, knowing that he needed to pull a trick in order to do it at all.

Hawks ends this funny, rumbustious and savage film with his two wounded heroes hobbling down the main street on crutches. As in *Liberty Valance*, the romantic legend has been transformed into an epitaph for the men of action. The heroes may be tired (and both Wayne and Mitchum, excellent as they are, now begin to show signs of bearing the same strain as their characters), yet *El Dorado* must be a desirable place if, like Hawks, you know it's where you really can do what comes naturally—and not worry too much about trends and fashions and slick city talk.

JOHN GILLET

HIGH AND LOW

THE DRAMATIC STRUCTURES of so many Japanese films could be considered as enigmatic reflections of their philosophy. *Rashomon* could be seen as the 'same thing' three times over; *Living* 'ends' halfway through the film when the real story begins. There are the long periods of quiet preparation in *Seven Samurai* suddenly exploding into scorching violence; the episodic wandering of Ichikawa's Private Tamura; the tranquil stillness of Ozu; the ethereal floating in *Ugetsu*. Kurosawa's *High and Low* (Gala) encourages the critic to approach its meaning through its particular structural features, which make it definitive and divergent at the same time. Three films in one.

It begins with an extremely tightly knit,



"EL DORADO": ROBERT MITCHUM AND JOHN WAYNE.

classical dramatic situation. On the night when he makes a decisive business investment, Gondo, a wealthy shoe manufacturer in present-day Tokyo (in many ways the world of *The Bad Sleep Well*), has to offer his whole fortune to an unknown kidnapper, only to find out that the criminal mistakenly took his chauffeur's young son for his own.

Should he still keep his word? The conflict of conscience between personal interest and basic human responsibility is stated with the directness of a morality play. It is played out in a single—wide-screen—room within a short tract of time, with some excellent movement of people, a feeling for sound, and light, crisp dialogue. The active forces of the drama tellingly establish the balance of strengths. For this is a picture about the distance between rich and poor in its elemental dimensions. One living in a luxurious villa on the top of the hill; the other—the kidnapper—in the Lower Depths, among the ramshackle wooden huts of the destitute. Seen from his window, Gondo's villa rises as a provoking symbol of social differences.

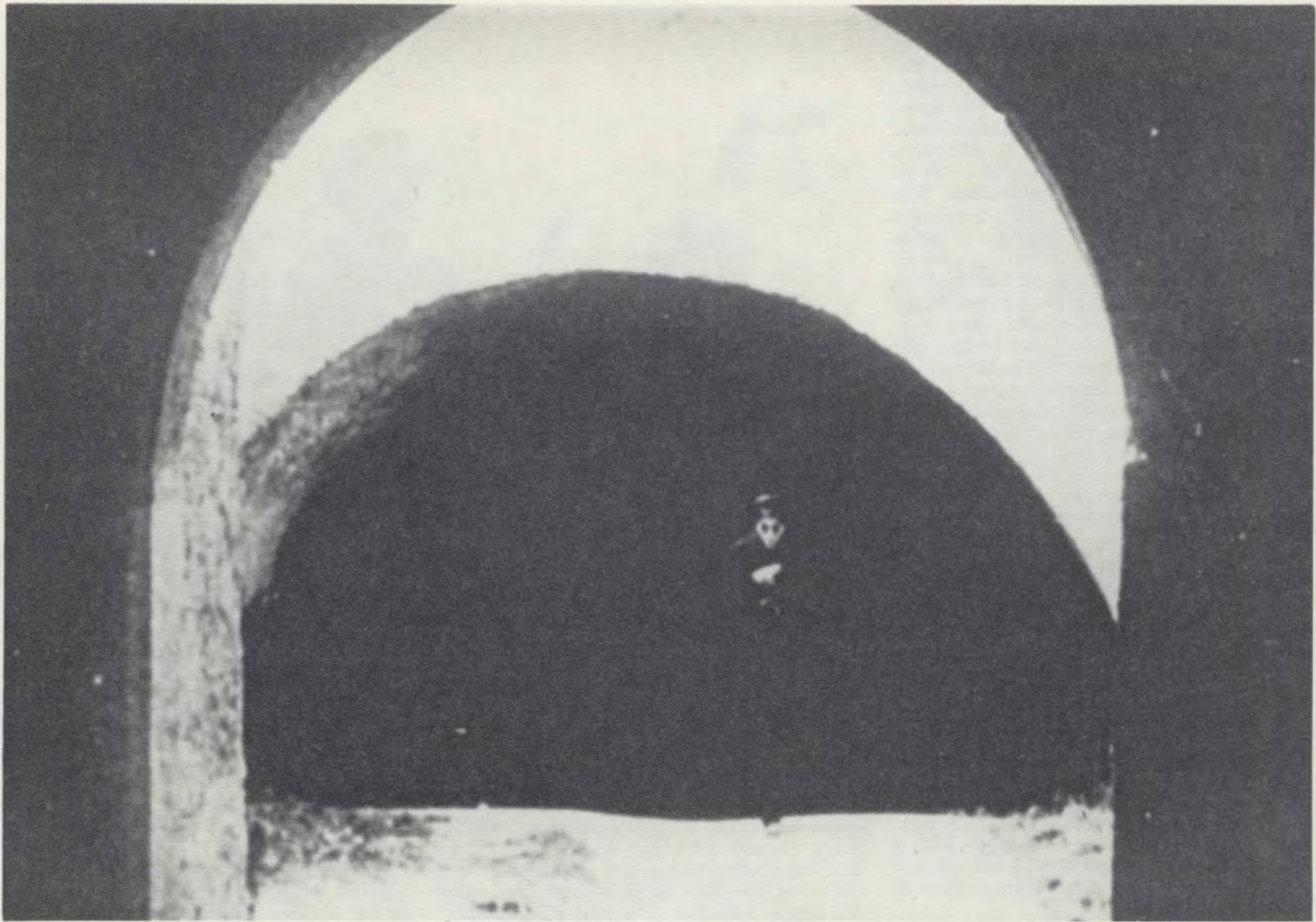
The division is present everywhere: between the desired 47 per cent of Gondo's shareholding as compared to the 46 per cent of his rivals; between the tycoon and his chauffeur; subconsciously between the two children, one of them playing the cowboy and the other the Indian. But the texture behind these divisions is constantly changing. When towards the end of the film the kidnapper approaches the tycoon (who doesn't know him), asking for a light for his cigarette, he does it out of insolence, to feed his feeling of superiority. Yet he is already the loser: the police are on the verge of tracking him down.

The feat of catching the criminal is really the 'second film'. It takes over after the closed dramatic situation and changes the tone to frantic external action. For a while

one is puzzled and tends to believe that, as in *Living*, a kind of human detective story will follow to carry the moral dilemma further and give light to the real purpose of the film. But the fascinating physical details of the *policier*—tracking down the kidnapper and finding evidence that he is also a murderer—become the centre of the film's interest. Soon the viewer finds himself absorbed in pure action, as the police, like their American counterparts in the Ed McBain novel on which Kurosawa's film is based, drive around in squad cars and report at briefing sessions. The case is made more holding in that, unlike the police, we do know the kidnapper's identity and can watch the process from both points of view.

And this is where we come to the 'third film'. Out of the intricacies of the action—dope-peddling, murder—emerges a portrait of the kidnapper, and the immediate and deeper motives behind his crimes. His longing to revenge himself on the rich and thus climb out of the Lower Depths. He is caught, the ransom money recovered; Gondo is rehabilitated and he is sentenced to death. In a concluding scene, *High and Low*, rich and poor, fortunate and miserable—all the elements of the film come together in one frame. The idea of social gaps and the balance of forces is restated, rounded up. And one wonders: was it really necessary to take two characters representing such obvious ideas through such circuitous routes to arrive at this simple, meagre point? A point, too, which has been stated much more forcibly in the first half-hour of the story. Should we look at it as a modern morality play? It is too one-dimensional, it lacks the mystery. An evocation of a significant social phenomenon in present-day Japan? It is more particular than that. But what it does offer is gripping, intellectually absorbing entertainment.

ROBERT VAS



SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE MURNAU'S NOSFERATU

MADE IN GERMANY in 1922, during the heyday of expressionist fantasy, F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* manifestly indulges the period taste for the horrific: the story is adapted (albeit freely) from *Dracula*; the vampire is monstrously conceived as the thin, repulsively bald Nosferatu, somehow suggestive of both a human skeleton and a rat. Yet, contrary to expressionist practice, the context is not of oppressively murky artificial sets. The settings are chiefly authentic: the ferocious landscape of the Carpathian mountains, the narrow streets and closely packed houses of a small town of the Baltic. The photography is limpid, almost naturalistic, free for the most part of elaborate lighting effects. Even the much-mentioned trick photography (which is in fact rather less prominent than film historians would have us believe) is of an elementary purity: self-opening doors and jerkily fast-moving carriages appear not amidst hazy shadows, but against a real, three-dimensional world brought into clear focus.

In retrospect, it is only too clear that a conventionally expressionistic film could scarcely have been expected of Murnau; that he could not have succumbed to elaborate

fantasy in *Nosferatu* any more than, ten years later in *Tabu*, he succumbed to Flaherty's dogged naturalism. The natural and the fantastic are but elements of an overall design, sometimes separate and distinguishable, sometimes inextricably mingled. Neither can be said to dominate the film.

The use of natural settings may at first glance seem simply a trick, a decoration designed to render the fantastic narrative more plausible and effective. In Dreyer's *Vampyr*, for instance, the deliberately blurred natural settings remain simply a stylistic device, brilliant but not indispensable: *Vampyr* probably would not be basically changed if shot in, say, an appropriate Old Dark House. *Nosferatu*, on the other hand, is unimaginable except in natural settings. To think of it as a more or less effective rendering of a given narrative is to miss its greatest riches: its strange, impassioned poetry; its sense of mystery, of the opaqueness inherent in a world seemingly fully revealed before our eyes; its view of the world as inescapably oppressive and sinister, however natural and commonplace it may seem. Far from a decoration on the *Dracula* story, the natural world is the true protagonist of *Nosferatu*.

Cinema, like painting, can concentrate on the rendering of solid objects, each having a specific importance and each perceived from a specifically suitable point of view; or it can take the opposite course and impose a single viewpoint on the entire visual field, the privileged object of perception being, effectively, empty space. (Most films, of course, combine the two approaches.) These two different modes may be characterised, respectively, as the cinema of close-ups (Dreyer, Dovzhenko, Eisenstein) and the cinema of long shots (Murnau, Mizoguchi, Antonioni), although these techniques are not strictly necessary for the accomplishment of one or the other purpose.*

Close-ups are the means by which, in Eisenstein's films, an object is isolated from its surroundings and perceived, from successively different angles, as possessing palpable bulk and a definite shape. Conversely, the unity of the visual field in Mizoguchi's films rests largely on his use of long shots. Yet, persistently as Dreyer brings the faces of his characters into privileged attention, only in *Jeanne d'Arc* does he actually rely extensively on close-ups. And Murnau can use a close-up—recall that exquisite shot in *Tabu* of Reri hiding behind Matahi's back as they confront the police officer—without for a moment losing sight of the rest of the visual field. It is, then, less a matter of an actual use of close-ups or long shots than of the impression created. An object, one might say, is effectively in close-up if it draws attention to itself, to a peculiar quality and meaning all its own; effectively in long shot if it becomes virtually meaningless when disengaged from the rest of the visual field.

Expressionist cinema is a cinema of objects and mists and obtrusive sets, of space obsessively filled. Murnau's cinema, on the other hand, is primarily a cinema of empty space. Signs of expressionism which appear in Murnau's films are for the most part (an exception is *Faust*) only superficial; and his best work (*Nosferatu*, *Tabu*, parts of *Sunrise* and *Tartuffe*) rather avoids them. In these films, as in Velázquez's 'Ladies in Waiting' and 'The Spinners', space becomes the central object: the space traversed during the trolley ride in *Sunrise*, immeasurably more expressive than any of the individual objects passed; the space surrounding the lovers' hut in *Tabu*, charged with the menace of a hostile world. Even the revolving door in *The Last Laugh*, often cited in the textbooks as an example of the use of symbolic objects in silent German cinema, is less prominent in itself than as a pivotal point in the space around it.

Like Velázquez, Murnau looks past the foreground and into the background; deep-focus photography, to judge from the evidence in Lotte Eisner's recent book, was employed from quite early in his career. Attention is not restricted to a sharply delimited object standing in the foreground, or even to a number of significant objects strategically placed within the frame. It is dispersed throughout the whole, throughout space; and space, fluid in nature and not likely to be contained within sharp limits, palpably extends all around the frame of the film. Murnau's compositions, his shots of details, have a certain imbalance, a deliberate incompleteness which relates them inextricably to the world around them.

With Murnau a shot is fundamentally unstable,† its structure constantly threatened, from all directions, by an encroaching outside world. The charged and restless quality of his images stems, in part, from the sense they convey both of the immediacy of that outside world and of its ineffable strangeness. The slow entrance of a ship into frame, interrupting the dance of celebration of Reri and Matahi in *Tabu*, physically marks the beginning of a sustained assault on the world within the frame, on the lovers' private world into

which the world outside forces them to retreat further and further. This differs not only from the static and self-enclosed images of a Dovzhenko, but also from a director technically much closer to Murnau, Renoir, where the sense of a world existing all around the frame, far from causing instability and unrest, comes about perfectly casually. It is, perhaps, a matter of a simple difference in basic attitudes: Renoir warmly accepts the world, while Murnau finds himself hopelessly at odds with it.

Despite their obvious differences in story and setting, *Nosferatu* and *Tabu* are in some respects remarkably alike. Of Murnau's surviving films, they are the only ones set chiefly in natural surroundings, the only ones to have been produced outside the major German and American studios. Among the films of the high silent period—when ostentatious technique was the order of the day—they are both admirably restrained. Furthermore, they are surprisingly similar in structure. Excluding the prelude in the Baltic town in *Nosferatu*, both films begin in settings far removed from ordinary experience—in one case the spectral landscape surrounding *Nosferatu's* castle, in the other an impossibly idyllic island of the South Seas. These remote worlds, immensely dissimilar as they are, both contain a menace. It is a menace which at first seems specifically associated with the setting, but which in fact, we come to realise, is far more fundamental. In both cases the menace expands—in both cases transported by means of a ship—to a more immediate, ordinary world. There, despite what, in *Nosferatu*, may seem like a happy ending, the menace prevails.

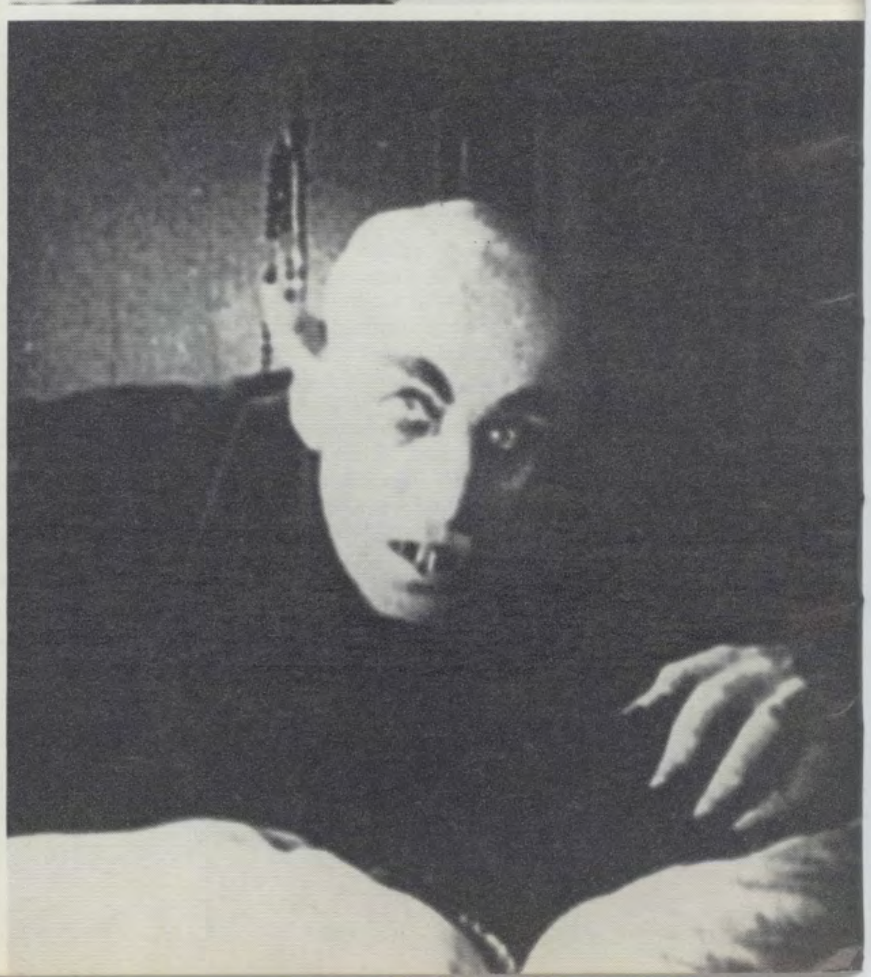
Yet to compare the two films in this way is to neglect not only the obvious, but also rather more significant differences. In *Tabu*, as in *Sunrise*, a fundamental polarity exists between the leading characters and their environment, a polarity in terms of which both the environment and the characters are virtually defined. In *Nosferatu*, on the other hand, the physical world almost invariably stands at the centre, an intensely charged pole lacking a balancing counterpart. The vampire himself, prominent and impressive as he is, is generally photographed from a distance—across an archway in his castle or amidst deserted streets in the quietly sleeping Baltic town—so that he appears, disturbingly, as somehow merged with the physical environment. There is, to be sure, an obvious analogy between the young married couple of *Nosferatu* and the leading characters of *Sunrise* and *Tabu*. Yet in the earlier film the couple is much less conspicuous a physical presence, the acting is of a coarse—and viewed today somewhat risible—expressionistic variety. Furthermore, in *Nosferatu*, despite various attempts (of considerable historical significance), the subjective point of view of the leading couple is never quite successfully established. The characters, then, prominently as they may figure in the original narrative, come across rather weakly in the completed film; and all the more so in contrast with the fiercely portrayed, the disrupted and oppressive world that surrounds them. Of such a world, toward which Murnau's imagination always gravitated, one finds in *Nosferatu* the undiluted essence.

If, in a film like *Tabu*, one were to respond directly to the physical environment, the result would probably be close to the paradisiacal calm of Flaherty's *Moana*. It is the peculiar poignancy of Murnau's film that, from the point of view of the lovers, nature's beauty acquires somehow a sinister quality; a quality so incongruous with what one would naturally expect that it evokes a sense of betrayal. Reri and Matahi, at the same time that they hope to attain a happiness, a harmony with nature, that never seems quite out of reach, come to feel a freezing indifference, almost an overt hostility, from the natural world.

In *Nosferatu* there is no such ambivalence. Despite its density, the earlier film has none of the dissonances of *Tabu*; its effect is of an unequivocal, an almost unrelieved blackness. The long and perfectly composed line of coffins that we see in *Nosferatu* through the young wife's window is in itself, without reference to the wife's point of view which we are supposed to share, a definitive image. We respond directly to the

*Bazin effects a similar division when he opposes montage to spatial unity. Yet a director like von Stroheim, whom he is compelled to group with Murnau, seems clearly more concerned with objects, and with the symbolism of objects, than with space.

†Alexandre Astruc has written: "With Murnau, each image demands annihilation by another image. Every sequence announces its own end."



regularity of those patterns of death, to the quiet fierceness of that image. What concerns us here is not, as in the later films, the characters' alienation and their attempts to resist the encroachments of the world outside; it is rather the absolute barrenness, the inescapable hostility of that outside world.

* * *

Nosferatu begins with a somewhat perfunctory prelude set in the Baltic town. A real-estate agent, obviously insane, acting under the long-range influence of Nosferatu, assigns his young and only recently married clerk to transact some business in Nosferatu's distant castle. Rather surprisingly, since the trip will for months take him away from his young wife, the clerk seems very happy to go. It is then that *Nosferatu* properly starts; almost at once we are immersed in the weird Carpathian landscape. The part of the film that follows—the sequence around the vampire's castle—perhaps comes closest to the conventional horror film. The world is remote, fragmented, invested with a sinister atmosphere by very deliberate means—often by the use of trick photography and of expressionist angle shots. This part of the film, in fact, is fashioned, like the original story, after the classic nightmare plot (of which the whole of Dreyer's *Vampyr* is another version), in which a succession of bizarre and seemingly unconnected events is seen from the point of view of a journeying young man.

Where Murnau yet differs from the Dreyer of *Vampyr*, and from most other exponents of the horrific, is in the clarity of his technique, in the perfect simplicity with which he presents what are usually rather self-conscious and elaborate effects. The camera tricks in *Nosferatu* have often been criticised for their crudity. An obvious criticism, one might say, since the technical resources of *Nosferatu* are manifestly very limited; and yet it overlooks what seems to be a quite conscious refusal on Murnau's part to bridge the gap between the natural and the fantastic, to blend more acceptably the jerky motions of doors and carriages with their natural surroundings. The trick photography simply and defiantly unsettles a context of reality. The result is bewildering; and—as in the scene in which the clerk watches, from a window of the castle, the incredibly rapid loading of a carriage with earth-filled coffins—often quite effective.

The trick photography, like the odd camera angles, Murnau uses deliberately as an enddistancing device. As such it becomes less and less prominent as the film moves from the remoteness of the Carpathian castle to the greater immediacy of the Baltic town. The clerk, having (literally) miraculously survived the encounter with Nosferatu, sets for home. Parallel to him, and with the same destination, a ship advances carrying Nosferatu and the earth-filled coffins. The two parallel motions, as well as various details from the Baltic town, are bound together in an intricate cross-cut structure (no doubt influenced by Griffith); a structure dominated by the recurring, massive ship; and culminating, with accumulated force, in the highly charged image of the ship's arrival in town. The clerk's journey plays only a secondary role; significantly, even as his wife awaits his return she instinctively turns toward the sea, the sea that brings Nosferatu and the coffins. The cross-cutting builds up an impressive rhythm; sometimes, one feels, at a sacrifice of meaning. Some of the details included do not seem relevant, and one especially regrets the presence of a biology class studying examples of natural vampirism. Yet it is in the context of this rhythm that Murnau succeeds in investing some perfectly familiar objects—the ship, the wind, the waves—with a quality of the supernatural; thus setting the ground for the town sequence with its indissoluble fusion of the quotidian and the uncanny.

Aboard the ship the vampire has exterminated the entire crew. It is the plague, the townspeople believe as they inspect the phantom ship that has arrived at their docks; and the plague spreads all across town. With the plague scenes the film attains, at the same time as its dramatic climax, the climax of directness toward which, from the deliberate remoteness of the early passages, it has been steadily moving. The streets and arches, the Nordic houses and pointed roofs, are unblinkingly photographed in deep focus and natural light. The

small-town milieu is vividly and effortlessly captured; in a few shots a sense is conveyed both of the greyness and boredom of the town's past and of the bleakness and horror of its present. Yet, for all the increased directness, all the unyielding photographic naturalism of these scenes, something, one senses, remains elusively beyond what the camera can capture. The physical world, placed almost tangibly before our eyes, is still somehow distant, inscrutable, ghostly.

For Murnau has shot these scenes almost exclusively in long shots; long shots which at first glance would seem to reveal everything, yet leave everything imprecise; which refuse to give a clue, to isolate an especially meaningful detail, and gradually make us aware that isolated details would in any case have no meaning; which in attempting to show us the whole, show us only that the whole is outside our grasp. The devastation of the little bourgeois town, horrible as it is in itself, seems only the reflection of some horror outside our grasp—a supernatural horror, to be sure, and yet one which seems not extraneous but ingrained amidst the natural surroundings.

The tone is set, from the start, with the simple yet resonantly weird scene of Nosferatu's arrival in town—at night, supposedly, though as shot the scene actually conveys the impression of early morning. Tiptoeing across deserted streets, Nosferatu, who has shown himself capable of propelling ships and carriages at fantastic speeds, now politely relinquishes his powers in order not to disturb the town's sleep. The supernatural, it seems, has snugly adapted itself to the town's rhythm of living. The monstrous figure of the vampire, photographed from a distance, appears, in the greyness of early morning, uncannily to blend with the natural surroundings. Indeed, since Nosferatu does not appear, after that scene, until the end of the film, it seems as though he had dissolved into the texture of those cheerless façades.

The ensuing plague, supposedly caused by the vampire's direct intervention, seems actually, to judge by all appearances, a perfectly natural phenomenon. We may be told that the familiar mark of the vampire is found in all victims of the plague, but, except for an earlier shot of the dead ship captain, we see no direct evidence of this; and the vampire himself is nowhere to be seen. Furthermore, the townspeople, it sometimes appears, are not aware of the presence of anything exceptionally sinister in their midst. Death is received with suitable solemnity, not uncontrollable panic; coffins are carried in orderly procession; a town official calmly goes marking with a cross the houses of the dead.

And yet an unshakeable strangeness pervades those quiet and composed funeral patterns. Just as the arriving vampire yielded to the tone and quality of the small-town milieu, so now this entire milieu subtly reflects the special circumstances of Nosferatu's arrival. The coffin that Nosferatu carried with him finds a repeated echo in the coffins of victims of the plague; the town streets are still quite as deserted, quite as silent and sombre as they were on the night of Nosferatu's arrival. It is as if, almost imperceptibly, the town's sleep had turned into death. And so the town's quietness and solemnity come to appear as a sign not so much of the townspeople's composure and control over the situation as of the intangible, strangulating grip of the supernatural. Horror and solemnity overlap, at times seem almost to coincide. One cannot speak of the supernatural as a hidden presence amidst the commonplace, but of its becoming in some degree identified with the commonplace, with the very conventions and outward manifestations of bourgeois life. As always with Murnau, the surface, the visible image, unable to encompass the whole, is yet bound intimately to it. Appearances are not deceptive, they are simply opaque, inherently incomplete; and precisely by our sense of their opaqueness and their incompleteness they make us aware of the whole, aware of the invisible.

* * *

Just as the physical world, and not any of the human characters, is the true protagonist of *Nosferatu*, so death, and not the monstrous eponymous vampire, is its true subject.

(Continued on page 159)

FILM CLIPS

THAT FIRST AUTUMN Terence produced a cinema film using our garden for most of the scenes. The story was a fantasy of the attempts of Sligger Urquhart to convert the King to Roman Catholicism. Elmley, John Sutro and I were the leading actors. A passing reference, one of many such in the autobiographies with which authors in their sixties have set about enshrining their mad student days in the Twenties, when movie-cameras were the new playthings of the young intelligentsia in their more frivolous moments.

But this is more interesting than most: the book is *A Little Learning*, 'I' is Evelyn Waugh, 'Terence' is Terence Greenidge, one of his Oxford friends, and 'that first autumn' is 1924, the year he came down from Oxford, three years after he had decided he was an atheist, and six years before he was himself received into the Roman Catholic church.

I wonder whether Waugh realised when he wrote this passage that the film still exists, preserved by Mr. Greenidge, who has recently offered it to the National Film Archive. Anyway, the bare description was sufficient to whet the appetite. The circumstances of its making and its subject-matter could hardly fail to make it interesting to Waugh readers, whatever its qualities as cinema art. And in the event it proves even more interesting than one might suppose. For one thing, Waugh does not remark in his autobiography that, as well as appearing in the film, he wrote the story and screenplay. In this early work, which is called *The Scarlet Woman*, by the way, the author of *Brideshead Revisited* is seen regarding the Papacy and its claims with a very different eye.

The story begins in Rome, with the Pope conferring with Chiara, the mother of Cardinal Montefiasco, who lives in a little cottage on the fringes of the Vatican. Chiara (Alec Waugh) drinks heavily and indiscreetly (brown ale straight from the bottle), while the Pope, who seems to be on suspiciously intimate terms with her, favours some lethal-looking liqueur. He is just completing his fiendish plans for the subjection of England, and details Montefiasco (John Sutro) to go off to England and put them into effect.

Here he is to get in touch with the Dean of Balliol, "England's leading Catholic layman" (Evelyn Waugh in an Old Mother Riley wig), who already exercises a sinister



"THE SCARLET WOMAN": ELSA LANCHESTER AND TERENCE GREENIDGE ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

influence over the Prince of Wales (John Greenidge). The first stage of their plan is to steal the crown jewels, which they set out to do with the aid of a fanatical Irish priest (Terence Greenidge). Breaking into Buckingham Palace, he finds the King dozing after a wakeful night spent with the Epistles of Paul, and manages to steal from his finger an enormous diamond ring before making his escape through the palace sewers.

All seems to be shaping well, until a spanner is thrown into the works by Lord Borrowington, Master of the King's Revels (Evelyn Waugh in a Groucho Marx painted moustache). He finds his old crony Beatrice de Carolle-Eland, queen of cabaret (Elsa Lanchester), on the point of suicide, worn down by debts and cocaine. To cheer her up he suggests a change of scene, to Saint James's, and thereupon the Prince of Wales falls completely under her spell, brusquely

dismissing the Dean of Balliol from his company. To discredit her, the Dean and Montefiasco arrange for their Irish henchman to give her the royal ring, as a gift from an anonymous admirer. This he does, and the Prince, seeing her with it, accuses her of theft and breaks off the liaison. Contrite, he returns to the Dean, but the Dean is pitiless: all his peccadillos will be revealed instantly to the King unless he agrees forthwith to be received into the Roman Catholic church. Fearfully he agrees, and the ceremony is performed at a sinister monastery in Putney.

But alas for the Dean's schemes, the Irish priest has fallen hopelessly in love with Beatrice, and after a long pursuit across Hampstead Heath he catches her on the point of ending it all. He pours out to her the terrible plans for a new St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, due to take place on the morrow, and she in turn races to

"THE SCARLET WOMAN": ALEC WAUGH AS CHIARA MONTEFIASCO.



Buckingham Palace to warn the King. The King arranges to send a missive to the leaders of the plot, who are carousing in Putney, telling them that he has been so struck by the advance of the Catholic cause in England that he wishes to meet them at the Palace and discuss plans for a conciliation.

Jubilant, they arrive at the Palace, and unwarily accept a drink while waiting. Of course it is poisoned, and all are disposed of, even the Prince of Wales. England is saved, and while the Pope and Chiara glumly continue drinking in the Vatican, the Irish turncoat is glimpsed, curiously like Buñuel's El, in quiet retirement at a children's orphanage in the depths of the English countryside.

All of this, as you may imagine, is treated as a jolly student romp: the tone of the humour and the irreverent treatment of royal private lives are in fact remarkably close to Swinburne's *La Fille du Policeman* and other skits on Queen Victoria and her court. It would be silly to try to read too much into it; probably to read anything into it, although it is tempting, gifted with hindsight, to see it as the sort of slightly nervous funning which often seems to bring the perpetrator into the arms of Mother Church before too long. Some of it is rather funny in its own right, and the scenes around Hampstead Heath have that strange documentary vividness which brings backgrounds unnoticed at the time startlingly to the foreground of later generations' attention. Most of the players overdo things somewhat, but Elsa Lanchester is stylishly funny. This, incidentally, was her very first acting appearance, a little while before she decided to take it up professionally.

Now that this great work has been rediscovered, I cannot help wondering how many other cinematic indiscretions of the great and famous lie gathering dust in attics. Does that slapstick film that Eisenstein made in 1929 at the International Avant-Garde Congress at La Sarraz, with Richter, Leon Moussinac and a host of notable intellectuals, still survive? And what about a later venture involving John Sutro, the sound version of *The Sailor's Return*, c. 1936, which Cecil Beaton describes in *Ashcombe*, with John Betjeman as the Vicar, Cecil Beaton as the Sailor, Caroline Paget as the Sailor's coloured wife, and John Sutro as a yokel? Just the thing, one would have thought, for an hour's curiosity on television. And who knows what other riches there may not be, just waiting for some film archaeologist of the future to dig far enough?

INTERVIEWING JEANNE MOREAU during the shooting of *Great Catherine*, I might just as well have been in the middle of the elephant house at the Zoo—an impression strengthened by the amount of water about on the set, where Catherine and Captain Charles Edstaston (Peter O'Toole) were in the midst of restaging the battle of Bunker Hill in the royal bathtub. Not, as it happened, Miss Moreau at this particular moment. It was supposedly Peter O'Toole's turn to get his eyebrows singed, while I chatted to his imperial partner in her dressing-room. But no sooner had she got settled on a tiny stool ("I can't sit on anything else, not with all these boxes on my hips," she said, gesturing towards the panniers which supported a dress made, I was disillusioned to find, of precisely the same material as my bedspread), than the succession of bangs and crashes from over the way would be

interrupted by some harassed assistant popping his head round the door with a request that she would come on set to give 'one of her looks'.

As one might expect, such minor interruptions were taken entirely in the star's stride. Off she would go, give her look, and return to pick up her sentence exactly where she had left it. Naturally, since nowadays she is possibly the only genuine card-carrying, gilt-edged, hundred-per-cent star under fifty in the world, I turned the talk to how it felt being the pin-up of the intellectual directors, the one reliable guarantee of success for any film she appeared in, however extraordinary. Obviously, she liked it: who would not enjoy having the best directors pressing on her any role she might conceivably play? But didn't this put her, pleasantly perhaps, in the way of temptation, to play parts that were not really suitable or work with directors she might admire but whose methods were at odds with her own?

"I really don't have any method of working. What interests me most in working with lots of different directors is to go along with them, do what they tell me, and see what they make of me. As for playing unsuitable parts—of course, I've made mistakes. But I suppose I must have a perverse streak in my nature: nothing makes me want to do something more than being told it is impossible for me. That is how I went into films in the first place. I was on the stage, and I was quite happy. Then people started saying that of course with my face I could never get into films, so immediately I determined I would. You know, I was so simple then. They used to play terrible tricks on me. They'd say, 'Come on, you're wanted for this scene,' and down I would go, and act my head off for hours on end, and then find I wasn't even on camera..."

But, I persisted, surely there were some directors whose way of working just did not suit her talents. What, for instance, about *La Notte*? "Ah, that I have never seen. I was unhappy then, and I think the film would remind me. It was my personal life,

which was very confused then. On the film Antonioni would not communicate with the actors at all, and when he said '*la notte*' he meant *la notte*: for more than thirty days we shot only at night, often in the cold and rain. It was depressing. Of course, I don't know how the film turned out. Often films where everyone is miserable turn out marvellous, and films you think are going to be marvellous while you are making them turn out... nothing." I told her I didn't think *La Notte* had turned out particularly well, mainly because she was too big and vibrant a personality to serve as the passive object Antonioni seemed to need. "Really? Marcello too, I suppose. He has one of those faces you have to watch, he is enormously expressive..."

Ah, I said, pouncing. Now tell me how you feel about the relation in your work between the star personality and the actress. Which do you find more agreeable, playing as a star, like in *Mata Hari*, or as an actress, like in *Le Feu Follet*, or a combination of the two, as in *La Baie des Anges*? "*La Baie des Anges*! I loved that film! It was the most marvellous experience for me. But to answer your question, I know what you mean, but I really don't think there is any difference. Of course star quality exists. Not only in films. Sometimes you are in a restaurant and someone comes in, man or woman, young or old, and you just have to look at them. Good looks have nothing to do with it, or fame or anything: it is a mystery. And that is something that an actor has or he hasn't. Many excellent actors don't; some terrible ones do. But I don't think it makes any difference to what the actor feels inside him when he plays a part."

But surely, I said, take say Joan Crawford, least actress of stars, and Geraldine Page, least star of screen leading ladies... "Geraldine Page? I haven't ever seen her. But yes, even there, I don't suppose Joan Crawford feels one little bit different from Geraldine Page when she approaches a role. Her requirements before she starts may be different—she will want a big close-up here, and a stronger scene there. But once she

JEANNE MOREAU IN "GREAT CATHERINE".





A SCENE FROM MIKLOS JANCISO'S "IJY JOETTEM", THE FILM HE MADE BEFORE "THE ROUND-UP", DUE TO BE SHOWN IN LONDON LATER THIS YEAR.

starts playing . . . And anyway, Joan Crawford was wonderful in *Johnny Guitar*. Did you see that? I only hope I will find a part like that in twenty years time."

How about acting in various languages? Did she find this difficult? Pursued lips, she paused to consider. "No . . . I don't think so . . . No. I have the impression that I could act in any language. Not long roles in the theatre, of course. But when I made *La Notte* I didn't know any Italian. I just learned my words like a parrot, and learned exactly what they meant, and then I could do it. Mike Nichols wanted me to play an American woman in a film he is preparing, and I said no. I think I could play any woman, but an American woman, that is different. I think it would just be ridiculous. But I have the impression it would make no difference to me if I were playing a role in . . . in Finnish or Japanese. And if anyone told me it was impossible, well . . ."

WHEN I MET Miklos Jancso he was hurrying along with a well-filled record-shop carrier under his arm. "Been buying records?" I enquired, rather unnecessarily. "Yes. Blues, dixeyland, jazz. Do you like?" Well, I said, I was happier myself with the Modern Jazz Quartet. "Oh yes, I like that too. But how can you like the end of the story if you don't like the beginning?"

It seemed a suitably odd opening for an encounter with the director of *The Round-Up*, one of the most holding, personal, and yet deeply mysterious films to come out of Eastern Europe for a long time. It was, what, his second feature-length film? He giggled cheerfully. "Oh no, it was my . . . fourth. I think. Yes, my fourth. The first, it was dreadful. The second, a little better. The third you will be seeing over here later this year. It is a sort of autobiography, in a way. Really, it is not at all like my own life, except a little, but I feel that inside it is the story of my childhood. And then I made *The Round-Up*."

How did he come to the cinema? "I don't know really; it was, how do you say, an accident." Well then, what did he do before? "I was an ethnologist. Really I was studying law, but both law and ethnology together. But I had always spent most of my spare time at the pictures, and I thought making films would be a marvellous thing to do. Only I didn't know how to go about it, so I went to Transylvania to do ethnological research instead." And films? "Well, I made some shorts. Fourteen shorts." Ethnological shorts? "A number of them you might call ethnological. But the later ones, they were about, oh you know, the artist's relation to his art and to reality, that sort of thing."

Did he know the films of another ethnologist turned film-maker, Jean Rouch? "Oh yes, but he is still an ethnologist. His ethnological films are very good—I mean from the ethnological point of view, as well as films. But I am not so sure about *La Pyramide Humaine*—I did not like that very much. Perhaps for him ethnology is best . . ." Well, I said, but how about your own transition from scientific shorts to features? "Oh that, it just . . . happened." How? "I'm not quite sure. I knew people who worked in the cinema, but myself I had only made short films, which no one in the professional cinema takes seriously. Ah, that is true here too? I suppose we are not so different after all. I had not worked as an assistant to a feature director, which was, and still is to some extent, the classic way of becoming a director. But then it was 1957, and as perhaps you will remember, it was a time of some confusion in Hungary, and regulations were not so tight as usual, and then somehow I managed to make this film . . ."

Trying another tack, I engaged him in conversation about world cinema at large. What films among the newer ones from other countries did they see in Hungary? "Not so many are actually distributed in Hungary, though among those that are

there are some surprises. But we in the industry, if we are interested, can see almost everything; we put on our own screenings." And what directors did he admire most? "I think Bergman, and Antonioni, and Godard. And Wajda—I think Wajda comes closest to my own tastes, interests and opinions." Bergman and Antonioni seemed a rather strange combination, I said. "Yes. Well, they appeal to different sides of my nature. I think that the cinema is not a very fine art; it is not for expressing ideas; it is, would you say, a show? Bergman is the director who accepts this most happily, and he has fantastic invention. In Hungary people think I am peculiar, because I prefer his comedies. And the last trilogy, of course . . . Antonioni? He fascinates me because he seems determined to do the impossible with the cinema, to make it convey the sort of ideas that it is quite unsuitable to convey. It is always fascinating to watch an artist working on the very edge of the impossible."

What about Jancso's own next film? I gathered it was set in Russia during the civil war, and involved a group of wandering Hungarians trying to get back to Hungary. "Yes, I think it will be about something like that . . ." But wasn't he going back right away to start shooting? "Yes, but I never know quite what will be in my films until I start making them. I know this one will have no story—no continuous story, anyhow. There are many characters," (he giggles appreciatively) "and all die. Yes all, they die very quickly. It is a war story, but it is not a war story. I mean, it will be about something else." What? "That I'm not quite sure yet." Like *The Round-Up*, which is a prison story and also something else? "You think so?" Yes; didn't he? "I'm not a critic. I make films, and years later, perhaps, I begin to see what I was doing, to see what I put in them. But it's too early yet with *The Round-Up*. Anyway, if I ever do decide what it's about, I'll probably be wrong . . ."

ARKADIN

BOOK REVIEWS

KEATON, by Rudi Blesh. Illustrated. (Secker and Warburg, 55s.)

SOMEWHERE IN OREGON, according to Mr. Blesh, lies the wreck of the *Texas*, the Civil War locomotive which slides slowly and grandly through the burning bridge in *The General*. Quietly rusting, it's still in the river where the film-makers left it after its heroic fall. In the Smithsonian Institute, more orthodoxly preserved, is the Gentleman's Hobbyhorse—the model of the first bicycle, built for Keaton to ride in *Our Hospitality*. As memorials to Buster, these two pieces of the Victorian machine age seem rather satisfyingly appropriate; as, in another sense, does Mr. Blesh's loving, detailed and nostalgic biography.

The show business biography is not, as a rule, the most trustworthy form of literature: inexact eulogy and all too exact verbatim quotations from long-ago conversations are its trademarks. At first glance, Mr. Blesh's book looks representative of the breed. But one instinctively trusts it, in spirit if not always to the letter. (There's a silly mistake, for instance, in the statement that Keaton died three instead of five months after the triumphant Venice Festival ovations.) Mr. Blesh puts himself generously at the service of his subject; and he draws on the reminiscence of an artist who, where any practical detail of his own work was concerned, seems to have had the nearest thing possible to total recall.

One could hardly, in fact, find a clearer indication of the differences between Keaton and Chaplin than the differences in tone between this essentially modest record and Chaplin's autobiography. While Chaplin was dodging Cocteau on the high seas and hobnobbing with the great men of Europe, Keaton was running a baseball team on the back lot, and playing what would seem to have been the taxing role of son-in-law to the Talmadges. Where Chaplin philosophises about comedy, Keaton remembers precisely how a gag was staged, and how he stood in relation to the camera. In the early days, as Mr. Blesh quotes Fatty Arbuckle, "he lived in the camera." He played scrupulously fair by it, never using a double, always preferring to show the whole of an action rather than to cheat a stunt by cutting; and he trusted in its powers as no other comedian has ever done.

Perhaps the most attractive section of Mr. Blesh's book, however, is the record of Keaton before he first met the camera in 1917 on the set of *The Butcher Boy*. The names on the first page are marvellous—Dogwalk, on the Eel River, birthplace of Buster's father Joe; Piqua, population 250, Hay Capital of the World, where Buster was born while his parents were touring with the Mohawk Indian Medicine Company. At the age of two, we're told, Buster during the course of one day caught his hand agonisingly in a mangle; threw a rock at a tree and had it fall squarely back on his own head; and was blown out of bed, out of the window, and into the next street by a cyclone. After which, presumably, the celebrated violence of the Three Keatons act, with Buster as a human missile for flinging if need arose at recalcitrant audiences, could hold no alarms. The family seems perpetually to have been escaping from fires in theatrical lodging-houses; mother became the first American lady saxophonist; photographs of Buster show him in the alarmingly wizened, monkeyish make-up of the vaudeville act, or self-consciously girlish and becurled as an 11-year-old Little Lord Fauntleroy ("The longest speaking part in the theatre next to Hamlet. Seventy-five pages and no action . . .").

Mr. Blesh doesn't, on the whole, sentimentalise. But he finds in the Keaton films traces of a search for a long lost childhood; and argues rather persuasively that *Our Hospitality* ("unique in the work of Buster Keaton as a story completely without bitterness") owes its exceptional sunniness to the family reunion atmosphere of its production. Elsewhere, he echoes James Agee's famous comment on "the freezing whisper not of pathos but of melancholia"—the sense of a small, remote figure haunted by intimations of disaster. One realises, as so often in reading about Keaton, how difficult it is

to make the films actually sound funny. Describe the plots, as Mr. Blesh does, analyse the structure of the gags, and one is left with a parade of catastrophe and ingenuity. The balance between pessimism and gaiety is almost too fine-drawn to transfer to the page.

Only fifty pages of a 370-page book are given to the period after 1933; the year when Keaton was divorced by Natalie Talmadge, made the last feature of his years with M-G-M, and took despairingly to drink. It's clear that what destroyed his career was not sound (which he welcomed, naturally, as an extension of the machine) but the erosion of his own way of making films, the enforced surrender to big studio disciplines. Among his suggestions to Thalberg are two superb unrealised projects: a wagon-train Western with Marie Dressler, and a *Grand Hotel* parody, in which Keaton wanted the Lionel Barrymore part (dying of hiccups, with only thirty years to live) and Marie Dressler was to spoof Garbo's ballerina ("The public thinks I am too old to dance. The fools!").

Then came the terrifying collapse into alcoholism, nightmare trips in and out of sanatoriums, an escape from a strait-jacket and down a hospital drainpipe. And then the recovery, and the extraordinary energy which helped Keaton to survive the crack-up. Early in the war, Keaton was back at M-G-M, dawdling the days away with two other "has-beens on salary"—his former director Edward Sedgwick and Lucille Ball. Restlessly idle, they spent the time constructing immensely intricate, dazzlingly far-fetched machines to Keaton's designs. Lucille Ball, perhaps, had the sweeter and quicker revenge, by way of television and *I Love Lucy*. But one forgets that between 1943 and 1966 Keaton appeared in 28 films—nine of them, astonishingly, in the last two years of his life. The reputation was unassailable long ago; what Mr. Blesh reminds us is that the man was undefeatable too.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

BOOKS RECEIVED

BEHIND THE SCENES IN A FILM STUDIO. By Elizabeth Grey. (Phoenix House, 15s.)

FILMS AND FEELINGS. By Raymond Durnat. (Faber and Faber, 45s.)

HORRORS. By Drake Douglas. (John Baker, 30s.)

ITALIAN CINEMA TODAY. By Gian Luigi Rondi. (Dennis Dobson, 84s.)

MY WONDERFUL WORLD OF SLAPSTICK. By Buster Keaton with Charles Samuels. (Allen and Unwin, 30s.)

'NEATH THE MASK. By John M. East. (Allen and Unwin, 55s.)

CANNES FESTIVAL

continued from page 122

film is set during the two days preceding the Spa race in which he tries desperately to borrow or steal a Porsche to enter. Skolimowski gently brings both his hero and us to a realisation that his mania for racing is intimately connected with his sexual frustration, and this without any indulgence in crude Freudianisms.

Pictorially he has outdone himself: the degree of invention is prodigious, and the film goes from one visual shock to another. But the shocks are never gratuitous—as was sometimes the case in the earlier films—and he has learned a new kind of explosive treatment of blacks and whites which carries you through the film on machine-gun wings.

I was less enthusiastic than some about the Yugoslav contribution to the Festival, but there is no denying that they seem to have made a giant leap forward. There were three films, one in competition—I *Have Even Met Happy Gypsies*—and two in the Critics Week—*Rondo* and *An Affair of the Heart*. Although the *Gypsies* film shared the Special Jury Prize with *Accident*, it is by no means on that level: a warm-hearted neo-realist investigation of the plight of these second-class citizens, it was greatly helped by its leading actor, a Yugoslav Belmondo. *Rondo* is a very intellectual affair about a young couple with a friend who calls round every Sunday to play chess. Their relationships slowly become more and more ambiguous, and this change is fascinatingly worked out. The conclusion lets the film down, however, and one is left feeling that the whole thing was more a good idea than a good film. My favourite of the three was Makavejev's *An Affair of the Heart*: a little too tricky, it nevertheless builds up genuine pathos in its story of a lusty telephone operator and her quiet rat-catching lover. This description may sound bizarre; the film is, too, but entertainingly so.

RICHARD ROUD

CORRESPONDENCE

Short Film Service

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—In their thoughtful feature in the Spring SIGHT AND SOUND, "Shorts and Cinemas", David Robinson and Ian Wright were generous enough to call the Short Film Service "a useful first step" towards the kind of National Film Board which the Short Film Makers Campaign has been advocating.

Four years ago I argued that the Service would be a worthwhile operation for the British Film Institute to launch, and only began it myself after it proved impossible to arouse the BFI's interest. Since then repeated efforts to co-operate with such bodies as the BFI and the COI have met with the retort that these organisations can have no truck with a 'commercial' undertaking.

It's satisfying to be regarded as an embryo National Film Board, but less so to be the only one in the world which is supposed to get by without any kind of subsidy or support. At least half the work we do—such as festival liaison, publicity for British shorts, information and consultancy services—really requires official backing and resources. More and more festival organisers and foreign journalists turn to us because they cannot get what they want elsewhere.

"With the existing shorts set-up it is difficult for such an organisation to get very far off the ground," comment Robinson and Wright. We couldn't agree more. We believe we've gone as far as we can towards centralising the supply of the best short films, and our present plans are largely concerned with challenging the bottleneck in exhibition with more ambitious screenings of our own (and here we'll be concerned with features as well).

"But," say the authors, "the potential is obvious." Again we believe it. All we need is sufficient official interest and support to make it possible for us to do the kind of job for British shorts that every State Film Board does for the work of its own short film makers.

Yours faithfully,
DEREK HILL

The Short Film Service Ltd.,
122 Wardour Street,
London, W.1.

Film Makers Co-operative

SIR,—David Wilson's article (Winter 1966) on the London Film Makers Co-op did the normally high journalistic standards of SIGHT AND SOUND less than proud. It contained errors of fact as well as distortions of intention.

The Co-op exists to provide a context and a centre for a free (without quotes) cinema. We want to create a focal point of activity for those who are actively involved in the future development of the cinema. We want to see, to make, and to make seen films which are not capital gains, films which are not made for the greatest number nor for the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

The only limits on the freedom of a film maker should be the limits of his imagination, but the British film industry has built itself into a commercial cul-de-sac. It cannot afford imagination, and hence offers no hope for the expansion of the cinema's capabilities. The Government utters pieties. The state-financed bodies, which should concern themselves with the young film maker's plight, seem congenitally incapable of understanding the new cinema's realities, and in any case consider such activity to be beyond their competence. Faced with the indifference of these three monopolies, the real film maker, the one who *must* make his films, is left alone in the void. His only alternative is to join 'the underground', a loosely organised resistance movement. What cannot be changed from within must be attacked from without. It sounds romantic, but it isn't.

We do not promise a Renaissance of the British cinema; nor do we expect an Eisenstein to appear fully grown in our midst. We do not share the delirious Messianism of our New York colleagues, but we have adopted their highly successful model for action.

The Co-op, like its American equivalent, functions in three main areas. First, and most important, is that of aid to the individual film maker by putting him in touch with other film makers, potential collaborators, and technical expertise; by helping him find equipment; and by presenting and distributing his films. Secondly, the

Co-op presents films, not only of its members but of experimental work from throughout the world. Film makers need to keep in touch with the new directions of the world cinema. Since the National Film Theatre does not consider the presentation of such films as part of its job, we hope that we shall be able to do this. And finally there is CINIM, the Co-op's magazine, which Mr. Wilson rather childishly maligned. Not only did he take a very unrepresentative quotation, but he also manufactured it by taking half a sentence from the beginning of an article and splicing it to half a sentence from the last paragraph. Not exactly good journalism. CINIM is about the cinema, its aesthetics, its future, and its creative use. It is not a subsidised sinecure. The lack of any vital discussion of the cinema in this country is, in our view, just as serious as the lack of any vital cinema, and they are not unconnected.

As for the errors of fact in Mr. Wilson's article, Mr. Matusow was convicted as a result of his appearance before the U.S. Senate's Sub-Committee on Internal Security as a *hostile* witness and of testimony by Roy Cohn. His film, *The Stringless Yo-Yo*, which Mr. Wilson with all his journalistic zeal apparently had not seen, is an indictment of the Committee, and not as the article suggested an anti-Communist tract.

Perhaps in future SIGHT AND SOUND could turn its biting critical eye with more purpose on the workings (sic) of the British Film Institute on the theory that people who live in glass houses etc. . . .

Yours faithfully,
SIMON HARTOG,
London Film Makers Co-operative,
94 Charing Cross Road,
London, W.C.2.

Weinberg on Sternberg

SIR,—In the interest of setting the record straight, permit me to answer Tom Milne's review of my Sternberg book in your last issue.

Taking Sternberg's importance "more or less for granted" is like the girl who was "slightly pregnant". It makes no sense. He is important or he's not, just as she is pregnant or she's not. Sternberg needs no *apologia sua vita* from me or anyone else. My book is a panegyric because he is important and as for being an "abstract panegyric", I must assume that Mr. Milne's French is less fluent than he thinks it is for I have demonstrated throughout, with meticulously detailed examples, characteristic elements that distinguish his work.

Dietrich was nothing before Sternberg, even she admits to that, and to cite *Song of Songs*, *Angel*, *Destry*, *Flame of New Orleans*, etc. as examples of films as good or better than Sternberg's with her is to demonstrate an almost total insensitivity to what Sternberg had accomplished with her.

Mr. Milne's "scholarship" consists of citing five British films George K. Arthur is alleged to have made before *The Salvation Hunters* to prove his debut was not in that film. That Dietrich was a "well-established actress" before *The Blue Angel* (what film "established" her before that?). A couple of minor mis-datings, a couple of typographical errors, which he attributes to me, not to the French printer—by what clairvoyance?

I most certainly do believe that the contemporary cinema is inferior (by far) to the old classic cinema out of which Sternberg stems. And the comedies we have today are *not* a match for Lubitsch. Are these really the heresies Mr. Milne thinks they are? Besides, he has taken this, as other of his animadversions, out of context. Talk about "loading the dice" (his phrase)!

Curious that Mr. Milne's eagle eye, which can spot a dropped "l" or "s", was unable to spot the two dozen or more flagrant factual errors in Andrew Sarris' Sternberg monograph, which he also reviewed. I like Sarris because his heart, at least, is in the right place, but his errors are not of dates and the minutest trivia but *real* errors, a list of which I will be glad to send Mr. Milne (or SIGHT AND SOUND) for his enlightenment. *This* is the test of scholarship.

I suggest Mr. Milne read the expanded English edition of my Sternberg book which will appear this autumn via E. P. Dutton in New York. Maybe he will understand that one better.

Yours faithfully,
HERMAN G. WEINBERG
New York 23, N.Y.

P.S. Among those who have unqualifiedly praised the French edition published by Seghers were *L'Express*, *Variety*, *Cinéma*, *Le Film Français*, *Cinéma 67*, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, etc., such historians as Lotte Eisner, Maurice Bessy and Robert Florey, George Amberg of New York University, and such directors as Fritz Lang, François Truffaut, Hans Richter, Thorold Dickinson and René Clair. Can it be that they are all out of step but Mr. Milne?

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE

continued from page 153

Some say that the vampire symbolises death: if so, how can the film end, in abrupt and arbitrary reversal of its steady linear development, with the death of the vampire, the death of death? In fact, *Nosferatu* ends, as one would expect it to end, with the irreducible triumph of death. This is only reaffirmed by the death of the vampire—and, at the same time, by the death of the young wife who in giving herself to him causes his death. Without the film's closing sequences *Nosferatu*'s relation to the death he supposedly brings about would remain unclear; for what strikes us most in the plague scenes is the utter impersonality, the inability to associate disaster with an individual agent.

In the splendid, underrated *Tartuffe* that Murnau did with Emil Jannings the true character of Tartuffe is not fully revealed, in his sinisterness and his vulnerability, until the scene in which he glides down the stairs to meet Elmire in her room. In much the same way (and in circumstances similar to those of Tartuffe's undoing), the true nature of the vampire is revealed fully only in the last sequence of *Nosferatu*. The vampire, as he is shown heading toward the wife's bedroom, abruptly coming out of the large dilapidated house that faces the young couple's house, is not only frightening but also, at the same time, aching, vulnerable. And upstairs, in the wife's bedroom, he becomes for the first time a mere phantom disconnected from the physical world, an impotent shadow struggling to possess the young woman's body, lecherously staying by her side until after sunrise. Daylight, which has done nothing to dispel the strangeness and horror that cover the town streets, now, through the window, kills the vampire.

A title then states that after his death the sick no longer died, and happiness was regained; yet it would be impossible for the camera to return to those streets and show them as happy again. The wife's sacrifice has been to no avail. What has vanished into thin air is merely a shadow; the substance of a hostile world is left intact.

Stills from "Nosferatu" illustrating this article have been taken from the frame by Cedric Pheasant.

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20th CENTURY-FOX for *Two for the Road*, *The Street With No Name*
 PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *El Dorado*, *You and Me*, *It's a Gift*, *The Old-Fashioned Way*, *Million Dollar Legs*, *Underworld*.
 UNITED ARTISTS for *La Notte*, *Meet Whiplash Willie*, *You Only Live Once*.
 COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Major Dundee*.
 M-G-M for *Blow-Up*, *David Copperfield*.
 WARNER-PATHE for *You're a Big Boy Now*.
 RKO-RADIO PICTURES for *Clash by Night*, *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*.
 RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Privilege*.
 BRITISH LION FILMS for *Ulysses*.
 CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *Judex*, *Lenin in Poland*.
 CONNOISSEUR FILMS for *The Red Desert*, *Alone on the Pacific*.
 GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *The Eclipse*.
 GOLDEN ERA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Scarlet Street*.
 AVON DISTRIBUTORS for *Une Part de Campagne*.
 KEEP FILM PRODUCTIONS for *Great Catherine*.
 ANOUCHKA FILMS/ARGOS/PARC FILM/LES FILMS DU CARROSSE for *Deux ou Trois Choses que je Sais d'Elle*.
 ANOUCHKA FILMS/PRODUCTIONS DE LA GUEVILLE/PARC FILM/ATHOS FILMS (Paris) for *La Chinoise*.
 FRANCINOR/A.J. FILMS/FILMS MODERNES for *Jeu de Massacre*.
 EUROPA FILM for *Elvira Madigan*.
 GEORGES DE BEAUREGARD for *Made in U.S.A.*
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FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two three or four stars.

ADVENTURES OF WERNER HOLT, THE (*Contemporary*) Or the last days of the Third Reich, as seen through East German eyes. Generally ponderous, and whatever atmosphere the original may have had is annihilated by characterless dubbing. (Klaus-Peter Thiele, Manfred Karge; director, Joachim Kunert.)

*****ALONE ON THE PACIFIC** (*Connoisseur*) Ichikawa's genius transmutes what might have been a monotonous and morally pretentious tale of a young yachtsman's long solo voyage into a warmly human and very funny film. "The lonely sea and the sky" speak for themselves in brilliantly organised 'Scope and colour. (Yujiro Ishihara, Masayuki Mori. Eastman Colour, CinemaScope.) Reviewed.

******BLOW-UP** (*M-G-M*) Antonioni mingles an obscurely swinging and vividly decked-out London with an oblique mystery story. The result is an odd, beautiful, and desperately sad parable about his old subject—the fallibility of the contemporary human male. (David Hemmings, Vanessa Redgrave, Sarah Miles. Metrocolor.)

CAPRICE (*Fox*) Doris Day and Richard Harris as industrial spies in the cosmetics trade fighting over a secret water-repellent hairspray. Rather over-plotted Frank Tashlin comedy-thriller; some good jokes around the middle, mostly about a non-water-repellent Doris Day, but it sags badly at both ends. (Ray Walston, Edward Mulhare. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

CASINO ROYALE (*Columbia*) Or six Bonds in hopeless pursuit of the big spy joke. David Niven in the Highlands; Joanna Pettet in Berlin; Peter Sellers in France; and a hysterical sense everywhere that the movie is running away and no one knows how to stop it. (Orson Welles, Deborah Kerr; directors, John Huston, Ken Hughes, Val Guest, Robert Parrish, Joe McGrath. Technicolor, Panavision.)

CHUKA (*Paramount*) Stolid Western of the lonely-fort-attacked-by-Injuns breed. John Mills stubbornly commands a garrison of drunks and mutineers, Rod Taylor argues that the poor Indians are just hungry. (Ernest Borgnine, Luciana Paluzzi; director, Gordon Douglas. Technicolor by Pathé.)

*****DUTCHMAN** (*Not yet known*) Brilliantly spare, edgy adaptation of LeRoi Jones' flaring racial-sexual dialogue between white girl and coloured man on the New York subway. Impeccable direction from Anthony Harvey in his first film. (Shirley Knight, Al Freeman, Jr.)

*****EL DORADO** (*Paramount*) Virtually a remake of *Rio Bravo* and none the worse for that. A typical Hawksian mixture of horseplay and violence with the familiar stalwart friends pitted against a nasty cattle gang. Some may find it old-fashioned, but it's easy just to sit back and enjoy the Master at work. (John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, James Caan. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

***FISTFUL OF DOLLARS, A** (*United Artists*) Amiable amoral, mildly enjoyable Italian Western, with plot lifted from Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* and star borrowed from TV's *Rawhide*. Sergio Leone's direction is efficient but colourless. (Clint Eastwood, Marianne Koch. Technicolor, Techniscope.)

FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN (*Warner-Pathé*) The creative Baron is here playing with a do-it-yourself transmutation kit, but outside the steam-puffing laboratory there's nothing to match James Whale's original. (Peter Cushing, Susan Denberg, Thorley Walters; director, Terence Fisher. Technicolor.)

*****GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, THE** (*Compton*) Pasolini's stark, direct, but far from simple retelling of the Gospel story. Christianity seen as a revolutionary faith, and even the Sermon on the Mount delivered with an almost irascible sense of urgency and intellectual power. (Enrique Irazoqui, Settimio Di Porto, Susanna Pasolini.)

****GRAND PRIX** (*M-G-M/Cinerama*) Frankenstein invades the world of Formula One motor-racing with an infectious enthusiasm that splits his screen into splendid fragments. His cursory script tends to leave the cast by the wayside; otherwise this is a magnificently photographed summary of everything one associates both with the sport and with Frankenstein. (Yves Montand, James Garner, Eva Marie Saint, Toshiro Mifune. Metrocolor, Super-Panavision 70.)

****HOMBRE** (*Fox*) Leisurely, literate Western, with Paul Newman as a loner who chooses to live by cold Apache logic rather than succumb to white man's humanitarian waffle. Brilliantly shot (Wong Howe) and acted, but flawed by final heroics. (Richard Boone, Diane Cilento, Fredric March; director, Martin Ritt. DeLuxe Color, Panavision.)

***HOMME ET UNE FEMME, UN** (*United Artists*) Anouk Aimée as a film continuity girl, Jean-Louis Trintignant as the racing motorist she falls in love with. Lashings of seductive camerawork (sports cars, the beach at Deauville), engaging star performances; extremely self-conscious charm, but it gets you. (Pierre Barouh, Valérie Lagrange; director, Claude Lelouch. Eastman Colour.)

***IMMORTELLE, L'** (*Contemporary*) Alain Robbe-Grillet's first (1962) film, a kind of metaphysical thriller about a young Frenchman in Istanbul and a mystery woman. Lots of enigmatic *Marienbad* time tricks; haunting Turkish locations; total effect exasperating, tantalising, but not without grip. (Françoise Brion, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze.)

******JUDEX** (*Contemporary*) Franju's tribute to Feuillade. Elegant period nostalgia with all the serial trimmings and an added dimension of supernatural poetry that is Franju's own. (Channing Pollock, Francine Bergé, Edith Scob, Michel Vitold.) Reviewed.

KISS ME GENERAL (*Bargate*) Leaden farce set in Occupied France, with Robert Hirsch as a small-time actor hopping in and out of disguises, joining a German military plot to kill Hitler, and becoming a hero in spite of himself. (Véronique Vendell; director, Michel Deville. Eastman Colour.)

****LORD LOVE A DUCK** (*United Artists*) Another look at sex in American universities, this one is snappier than most owing to the splendidly suggestive presence of Tuesday Weld in her best performance yet. Rather erratic direction, but always lively. (Roddy McDowall, Lola Albright; director, George Axelrod.)

MAGNIFICENT TWO, THE (*Rank*) Better than average Morecambe and Wise comedy, with the comics here in the thick of a South American revolution. Quite inventively scripted, and directed with some style by Cliff Owen. (Margit Saad, Virgilio Teixeira. Eastman Colour.)

***MAN FOR ALL SEASONS, A** (*Columbia*) Fred Zinnemann's intelligent if rather academic version of Robert Bolt's play. Always good to look at, and fine performances all round, with Paul Scofield's More towering over all. But the film's faults are those of the play. (Robert Shaw, Leo McKern, Wendy Hiller. Technicolor.)

****MEET WHIPLASH WILLIE** (*United Artists*) Billy Wilder in spry disenchanted form, with a story about a lawyer who persuades his brother-in-law to take to his bed so that he can cook up a huge accident insurance claim. Acid enough to burn holes in the carpet, though Wilder gives it one of his softened-up endings. (Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau, Ron Rich. Panavision.) Reviewed.

MISTER TEN PER CENT (*Warner-Pathé*) How playwright Charlie Drake writes a flop so awful that it becomes an overnight success. Much characteristic knockabout, but no bite at all. (Derek Nimmo, Wanda Ventham, John Le Mesurier; director, Peter Graham Scott. Technicolor, Techniscope.)

MUMMY'S SHROUD, THE (*Warner-Pathé*) Pathetic plot through Pharaohland with the usual gaggle of archaeologists mooning about pending assault by mummy. Momentary illumination from Catherine Lacey as a cackling soothsayer. (John Phillips, André Morell, David Buck; director, John Gilling. Technicolor.)

ONE SILVER DOLLAR (*Warner-Pathé*) Rambling Italian Western, with a hero who comes back from the dead and proves he's very much alive by decimating most of the cast. Much blood, little thunder. (Montgomery Wood, Evelyn Stewart, Peter Cross; director, Kelvin Jackson Paget. Eastman Colour.)

PISTOLERO OF RED RIVER, THE (*M-G-M*) Routine Western which tries hard to be more than routine but never gets clear of its dilatory script. Amiable performances from Glenn Ford and Angie Dickinson. (Chad Everett; director, Richard Thorpe. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

***PORNOGRAPHER, THE** (*Antony Balch*) Or how to make blue films strictly therapeutic. The hero feels this is his mission and goes quietly mad making a life-like female substitute. An odd mixture of sociology and farce, and intriguingly Japanese in its attitudes. Shoichi Ozawa, Sumiko Sakamoto; director, Shohei Imamura. 'Scope.)

PRIVILEGE (*Rank*) Peter Watkins' wildly ambitious first feature, about a pop star forced by State, Church and the City to take the lead in a youth-pacifying religious revival. It tries to generate a lot of heat, but one never really feels there's the juice in the battery. (Paul Jones, Jean Shrimpton, Mark London. Technicolor.)

****PROFESSIONALS, THE** (*Columbia*) Solid, action-packed adventure, about derring-do in Mexico at the time of Pancho Villa. Excellent cast, led by Lee Marvin and Burt Lancaster as soldiers of fortune, relax into traditional roles; Richard Brooks, as writer-director, prods the movie into some attitude-striking. (Robert Ryan, Jack Palance, Claudia Cardinale. Technicolor, Panavision.)

SAND PEBBLES, THE (*Fox*) The trials and tribulations of an American gunboat on the Yangtze in 1926, wearily plotted by Robert Wise. Muddled messages shout for attention (for China 1926 read Vietnam 1967), with ship's engineer Steve McQueen learning to love the natives as well as his nuts and bolts. (Richard Attenborough, Candice Bergen, Richard Crenna. DeLuxe Color, Panavision.)

SHUTTERED ROOM, THE (*Warner-Pathé*) Stylishly directed, quite intelligently plotted thriller, pulled down by a flat ending. Flora Robson splendid as the bedraggled Aunt Agatha who holds the key to the mystery. (Gig Young, Carol Lynley, Oliver Reed; director, David Greene. Technicolor.)

***SORCERERS, THE** (*Tigon*) Karloff and Catherine Lacey (quite splendid) as a pair of decrepit mesmerists earning vicarious thrills by forcing a young man to commit all sorts of nastinesses from robbery to murder. Intelligent and authentically *sadiste*, but let down by poor camerawork. (Ian Ogilvy, Elizabeth Ercy; director, Michael Reeves. Eastman Colour.)

STRANGER IN THE HOUSE (*Rank*) Simenon's novel glossily transposed to Winchester, where the young would appear to have no morals. James Mason has a whale of a time as the dilapidated lawyer and even survives the detergent-white flashbacks. (Geraldine Chaplin, Bobby Darin, Ian Ogilvy; director, Pierre Rouve. Eastman Colour.)

THREE BITES OF THE APPLE (*M-G-M*) David McCullum as an innocent English travel agent whose gambling success attracts the attention of glamorous thief Sylva Koscina. Pleasing locations and a few jokes aren't enough to sustain a dreary comedy. (Tammy Grimes, Harvey Korman; director, Alvin Ganzer. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

TRYGON FACTOR, THE (*Rank*) Criminal conspiracy, a sisterhood of smuggling nuns, and a stately home where everyone is mad; but it's a thriller a lot less entertaining than it should have been. (Stewart Granger, Susan Hampshire, Robert Morley; director, Cyril Frankel. Technicolor.)

***ULYSSES** (*Columbia*) The film itself scarcely justifies all the fuss, but in gallantly tackling the impossible it does strain off some of the Joycean essence, especially towards the end with Barbara Jefford's majestic Molly Bloom making the obscenities sound really musical. (Milo O'Shea, Maurice Rooves; director, Joseph Strick. Panavision.) Reviewed.

***WARNING SHOT** (*Paramount*) An unpretentious attempt to revive the old private eye thriller with thoroughly enjoyable guest performances and suitably crisp and slangy dialogue. (David Janssen, Sam Wanamaker, Lillian Gish; director, Buzz Kulik. Technicolor.)

****YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW** (*Warner-Pathé*) Sympathetic 19-year-old struggles with the problems of girls, parents, and a job which keeps him roller-skating round the stacks of the New York Public Library. A bit derivative, a bit cute and whimsical, but mostly refreshingly crisp and funny. (Peter Kastner, Elizabeth Hartman, Geraldine Page; director, Francis Ford Coppola. Eastman Colour.) Reviewed.

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Films & Feelings

Cinema is the artform of our century. In
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he confronts is a hybrid of theatrical,
visual and literary forms. All too often
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dismiss the different tastes of most
cinemagoers, and those who understand
their tastes have themselves little taste
for aesthetic theory. As a result discussion
of the cinema and of its cultural implica-
tions is often stultified. Precisely because
of its close attention to details of style
and content alike, this book begins to
establish a common language, a common
awareness. The implications often extend
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